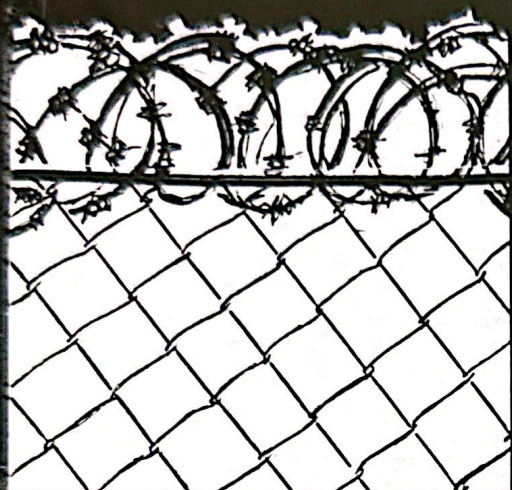
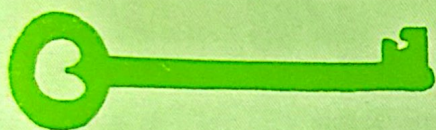


# Connections

An International Women's Quarterly



Women *inside*




And *out*



Fall 1984 No. 14





Despite the uniqueness of each woman's experience, there is a commonality that underscores the theme of this issue, *Women Inside and Out*. Whether in a mental institution or prison, on a bantustan or in a rest home, under house arrest or in a juvenile detention center, confinement challenges each woman's resources, and she is confronted by isolation, alienation, physical and sexual brutality, regimentation. However, drawing on a deep reserve of strength, women defy the walls of institutions with the will to resist and survive, to maintain human dignity, both individually and collectively.

It is difficult to make statistical comparisons of imprisonment internationally because information and statistics from many countries are not available. For instance, we were unable to find information on the incarceration rate in the Soviet Union. However, based on available statistics, the U.S. has the second highest rate of imprisonment in the world. And the influence of the U.S. penal system is extended to other countries with high incarceration rates (i.e. in Latin America and the Philippines) through U.S. sponsored international police training institutes. Ironically, even though the FBI has reported a decrease in the crime rate, the recession has been accompanied by an increase in incarceration—a way to keep the unemployed and under-employed off the streets.

For women in the U.S., incarceration rates have changed drastically in the past ten years during which there has been a 100% increase of women in prison. Of these women, 92% are in for non-violent crimes (fraud, theft, drugs), and 80% are mothers. The proportion and increase of women of color in prison is dramatic—55% of female federal prisoners are Black.

Some countries have high rates of political prisoners—people who are imprisoned because of their political beliefs and may have committed a crime as a result of these beliefs. Under the Geneva Convention, political prisoners, like prisoners of war, are guaranteed privileges that so-called common criminals (people who "break laws" for reasons other than political motivation, i.e. economic) are not. A number of countries, including the U.S., deny political prisoner status, preferring instead to prosecute on criminal charges. This delegitimizes the politics of an individual's action, and avoids bad international press and the Geneva Convention guarantees. The blame for the crime falls onto the individual or group rather than the state.

Mental institutions are often a convenient way to imprison people who have not broken the law, but have somehow been deemed unfit to continue living as a part of the society. In many industrialized countries, including the U.S., more women are committed to mental institutions than men. (The reverse is true for prisons.) Many women who are institutionalized are not acutely ill. They are tired, depressed or angry and don't know where to turn. In the U.S. and England, a person can be committed without her/his consent and held up to 72 hours. If it can be proven that they are unable to feed, clothe and house themselves, they may be held an additional 14 days and a guardian will be appointed to make their decisions. Though patients *do* have rights, they are often not informed of them and are not encouraged to exercise them.

Despite the obstacles placed in the paths of women in the various kinds of institutions explored in this issue, women are taking control. They are moving with self-determination—organizing in prisons, such as in El Salvador, Ireland and Israel. Women on the outside are exchanging information and maintaining solidarity with women inside. New approaches to combating mental illness are being created by and for women. Rather than encouraging dependence, alternative institutions are helping women find their own power and giving them better tools with which to re-enter the world. By being aware of the walls surrounding us, we can dismantle and build, from the inside out, as well as the outside in, new institutions that will better serve our lives.

#### Further Readings:

- No More Cages, a women's prison newsletter, available through Women Free Women in Prison, P.O. Box 90, Brooklyn, New York, 11215.
- Madness Network News, anti-psychiatry/psychiatric inmates' quarterly, P.O. Box 684, San Francisco, CA 94101.
- Racism and Mental Health: Essays, ed. by Willie, Kramer, Brown, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977.
- Women and Madness, by Phyllis Chesler, Doubleday and Co., Garden City, New York, 1972.
- Madness and Civilization, A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason, by Michel Foucault, translated by Richard Howard, Random House, New York, N.Y., 1965.

#### Contacts:

- Amnesty International U.S.A., 304 W. 58th St., New York, N.Y. 10019, Attention: Publications Department.





Illustration by Vonda White, Woman Prisoner

ROSI (Remember Our Sisters Inside) is a prisoners' art network whose purpose is to help publish the artwork of women who are or have been locked away from society. They publish postcards, posters, stationery, etc., and supply prisoners' art to interested publications. They are actively seeking other women to work with inside and outside.

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#### Special Thanks To:

African Resource Center, Ellen Barry, Joan Brann, Mary Gibson, Anne Icon, Gweyn Kirkpatrick, Warren Reier, Shauna Haines, Nancy Shaw, Cosette Thomson/Amnesty International, Cherryll Walker, Women Against the Occupation.

#### Statement

*Connexions* is the collective product of feminists of diverse nationalities and political perspectives committed to contributing to an international women's movement.

We want to go beyond merely providing facts and information, and hope that by passing on—as directly as possible—women's writing generally unavailable in the U.S., we will be helping women here to understand and connect with the experiences and viewpoints of women in other parts of the world. We also want to contribute to the growth of a worldwide network connecting women working on similar projects by researching, establishing contacts and exchanging information with other women's organizations.

To a large extent, the economic and political conditions under which we live determine the issues to which we give priority. Women do not live in a vacuum, but in what is still largely a man's world. It is essential for us to understand the working of that world if we are to understand each other. We hope that *Connexions* will be one step toward building an international women's movement.

*Connexions* is a quarterly and each issue focuses on a specific theme. *Connexions* is published by Peoples Translation Service, 4228 Telegraph Avenue, Oakland, CA 94609. Subscription rates are \$12 per year; Canada and Mexico US\$14; Overseas—US\$14 surface, US\$20 airmail. An annual institutional subscription is \$24.

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# Professional Rebellion

Egypt

Nawal El Saadawi is an Egyptian doctor and writer. She identifies herself as a "historical socialist feminist" and writes candidly about the oppression of Arab women and their sexuality. Some of her works have been banned in Egypt which has forced her to publish outside her own country. Recently, she has been translated into English and several other European languages. Many of her works have been translated into French.

(The following interview with Nawal El Saadawi was conducted by Teri Gruenwald for *Connexions* in May 1984.)

**Q: What lead you into psychiatry?**

**A:** I began as a medical doctor working in the rural areas and in the villages. Initially, I worked as a chest physician, then I specialized in public health and mental health. I held a high post in the Ministry of Health as Director of the Health Education Department. I lost that job under the Sadat regime in 1972 and went to study psychiatry at Ain Shams University. I went into psychiatry because I felt it was very much linked to my work as a writer. When I write a novel, I am dissecting the character, the personality of who I'm writing about. Psychiatry is the practice of understanding people and analyzing their personality, their character.

While working at the university, I began a research project called "Women and Neurosis." I interviewed 160 women in mental hospitals and prisons trying to understand why women become neurotic; why they develop depression, anxiety or hysteria. The outcome of my research was a book published in Arabic called *Women and Psychological Conflict*. Quite a lot of people read my book in Egypt and in the Arab world and some started coming to my home for advice and consultation. I give free consultation and in return I keep in contact with people, especially young people, and their problems.

I am not a traditional psychiatrist working through a clinic. I am more or less a psychiatrist who wants to change psychiatry and reach people through writing rather than through clinical work.

**Q: What kind of reception have your books, especially *The Hidden Face of Eve* and *Women and Neurosis* received from the medical profession?**

**A:** Some of the progressive doctors really want to change, especially the young doctors. They read my books and come to my home for discussions. But some of the older generation of traditional doctors don't like what I say. They think I am violating the medical profession.

**Q: How do you see traditional psychiatry?**

**A:** The medical profession is very commercial. You find the psychiatrist sitting in his clinic watching the clock. He will interrupt you in the middle of a sentence when your time is up. A psychiatrist usually prescribes drugs to his patients. It's easy—he writes you a prescription for some sleeping pills, some tranquilizers and you go home with many drugs to swallow. They call this "treatment" and they profit a lot. Psychiatrists can become very rich in this business. And it's the women who suffer.

**Q: What did you discover in your research about women and neurosis?**

**A:** I discovered quite a lot about psychiatric doctors. Most of them believe that mental problems are congenital, genetic or related to the past. So the psychiatrist often asks the patient about her mother or father—whether the parents had a history of depression. The psychiatrist is not interested in the patient's present life. Maybe the patient has a very cruel husband who is responsible for her neurosis. The psychiatrist does not question

the relationship between husband and wife because he believes a wife must be obedient to her husband to have a good mental health attitude.

I found in my study that the causes of neurosis, depression or anxiety in women are related to their present life rather than their past history and it is usually caused by a man in her present life (husband, father, boss) who is oppressing her. So neurosis is more often socially caused rather than congenitally or genetically caused.

Most psychiatrists believe that domination of the husband over the wife is something natural and even sought for—every husband is dominant, every wife obedient. They don't think the woman becomes neurotic because her husband is dominant. They can't understand that. They treat her in such a way that she should submit to her feminine attitude, her feminine role. They don't try to make her aware of her identity, her independence, her personality. They try to help her adapt to the marriage system and to fit into the obedience role. Most of the women I interviewed during my research were suffering from domination of their husbands. They were beaten by their husbands. They couldn't tolerate such a life and they were rebelling. To a traditional psychiatrist, they were unable to adapt.



**Most psychiatrists believe that domination of the husband over the wife is something natural.**

**Q: How did the women you interviewed for your study on "Women and Neurosis" respond to your questions?**

**A:** Some of them at the beginning were resistant, especially the women in prison. Firdaus, who was the topic of my book *Woman at Point Zero* refused to meet me. She thought I was going to investigate her. But after a time, they developed confidence in me and some of them became my friends.

**Q: What kinds of crimes had the women prisoners you interviewed committed?**

**A:** Different crimes—some of them were killers—the prostitute who killed her pimp, the wife who killed her husband, the mother who killed her children. One woman killed her child because she was poor and she couldn't find money for food for him. One woman killed her illegitimate child. There were women who sold narcotic drugs, prostitute women and women who were thieves.

**Q: How do women end up in the prison mental hospital?**

**A:** Some women develop mental symptoms in prison and are referred to the hospital. They stay at the hospital for a very short time to be treated as an emergency. Then they go back to their cells, and if they develop symptoms again they return to the hospital.

**Q: What are the conditions inside the prisons, the prison hospitals, and the public and private mental hospitals?**

**A:** The situation is very desperate in the prisons. In prison hospitals the situation is bad—the treatment is lacking. The doctors are



negligent of the patients because they are considered prisoners not having full rights. The same goes for the public mental hospitals. They are free for the poor and are also very bad, but they are better than the prison hospitals.

The free mental clinics suffer from overcrowding. Some people even sleep on the floor because there aren't enough beds. Some of the nurses exploit the patients by making them work or by stealing their food. These situations are improving now because many people began writing about the conditions in the hospitals.

But in the private mental hospitals, you find the upper class women in clean, bright surroundings. If you go first class you have your own room with a bathroom.

**Q: Do women voluntarily go to mental institutions or are they committed?**

**A:** The poor women don't go voluntarily; usually someone in their family takes them. If for example, a woman develops hysterical fits, especially a poor woman, she is taken by force to the mental hospital.

With upper class women, when they suffer depression or anxiety, they go by themselves just to change their atmosphere. Or her doctor may advise her to go to an institution for a month or so to get treatment and relax.

**Q: If a husband wants to get rid of his wife, can he commit her to an institution?**

**A:** To get rid of her, he can divorce her. Why should he send her to an expensive institution? The Egyptian family law gives a man the full right to divorce his wife without any reason. Women live under pressure because they are afraid of divorce.

**Q: Is there a high suicide rate among women?**

**A:** No, but there are a few cases.

**Q: Are lobotomies and electric shock treatment practiced on women?**

**A:** I haven't heard of lobotomies used in psychiatric cases, only in organic cases, when there is a tumor on the brain. [As for shock treatment] they still practice it in hospitals, but the percentage of usage is diminishing, because some people have started to write about it. I wrote in one of my books about damage the electric shock treatment caused. It really affects the brain and personality, so quite a few doctors are refraining from using it.

**Q: Are there any movements among mental health patients to organize for better rights?**

**A:** No, not yet.

**Q: And women prisoners?**

**A:** Among women prisoners it is very difficult. The prisons are very oppressive. The women are kept separate by the jailers so they cannot come together to communicate or organize.

**Q: Are the prisons overcrowded?**

**A:** Yes. When Sadat sent 1,536 political prisoners to jail, there was no room for us. [These mass arrests began in September 1981; those charged were held under the "Law for the Protection of Values from Shame."] I was with a group of 14 women. They had to evacuate the cell of the beggars for us.

**Q: Who were the women you shared the cell with?**

**A:** We came from different groups; there were Muslim fundamentalists, leftists, liberals, Christians—all of the opposition were represented in the cell. It was quite an experience. I wrote a play about it called *Twelve Women in One Cell* and also a book called *Memoirs of My Life in Prison*. [Neither are currently available in English.] The three months in prison gave me insight and exposure to a totally different life and totally different people. Whether it was the Muslim fundamentalist or the jailer or the prostitute who served us, everything was new to me.

**Q: The prostitutes served you?**

**A:** The jailers used prostitutes to assist them in washing clothes and in cleaning the wards. They used prostitutes, but they wouldn't use a woman who sold drugs, for instance. There is a class system in prison—those women who sell drugs are rich and



**I never imagined I would someday be a prisoner myself.**

dignified so they might assist the jailer in some of the administrative work. The prostitutes who are imprisoned are considered lower class. Only the poor prostitutes end up in prison, the rich ones pay bribes and escape being caught.

**Q: Were you able to have outside contact when you were in prison?**

**A:** No, not a newspaper or even a paper and pen. Everyday there was an inspection. After the assassination of Sadat, though, inspections loosened and we were able to smuggle some things in. The same prostitute who washed our cell, smuggled in toilet paper to write on and pens. So I started writing my memoirs on toilet paper and buried my writing under the ground. I remember one day I unburied my writing and it was all wet, so the letters were indistinguishable. So I started putting the papers inside a tin can so that the water from the ground wouldn't spoil it. We also smuggled a small radio to try to keep in touch with the outside world.

**Q: Was there a lot of public reaction to these mass arrests?**

**A:** Outside Egypt, yes. We heard through the radio that internationally people were speaking about it. But in Egypt the radio and the newspaper are controlled by the government. They accused us of being traitors. So we didn't like to listen to the station from Cairo or read the Cairo newspaper.

**Q: Were you in prison when Sadat was assassinated?**

**A:** Yes, I was released two months after his assassination [November 1981]. Government officials came to the cell, told me to get my clothes and took me in a car, refusing to tell me where I was going. I thought they were taking me to another prison, but instead I found myself at the home of the new president [Hosni Mubarak]. It was so dramatic. I was one of the first groups of 31 people to be released, and he invited us to his home for a discussion. It was really interesting because I found myself in my sneakers from the cell standing in the house of the president.

**Q: Were you doing work about women prisoners when you were arrested?**

**A:** Yes, for many years. When I interviewed women in prison, I never imagined I would someday be a prisoner myself because I've never been a member of any political group. I have always been an independent writer. But under Sadat a lot of people were jailed, including singers and poets. □

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- The Hidden Face of Eve, by Nawal El Saadawi, Beacon Press, Boston, 1980.
- Woman in the Muslim Unconscious, by Fatma Ait Sabbah.
- "What is Creativity," Connexions #4, Spring 1982.



# Bureaucracy of Sorrows

Landlocked between China and India, Nepal values its autonomy. It has seen the invasion of Tibet by China and how the two Himalayan countries of Bhutan and Sikkim have become protectorates of India. Today, Nepal is dependent on tourism and foreign aid for its survival in the global economy.

In the 1950s, the present monarchy, now headed by King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah, brought an end to the 100 years of political and cultural isolation of the Rana rulers. Nepal has since been developing its own definition of government to suit the diverse cultural identities among the different ethnic groups. At the same time, there has been an emphasis on developing national unity, along with a non-aligned foreign policy. After many political struggles, a partyless panchayat democracy (elective village council) was formed wherein the king acts as head of state.

The king is considered a god which places him above criticism among the 90% Hindu population. He not only has power over the religious lives of people, he also has power over their political lives. Decisions such as schooling, national development programs and foreign policy are as much his as the national panchayat's (elected from the village council). It is important to note that the farther away from the capital, Kathmandu, the less real the government seems to people. How real are national politics to a woman whose primary concern is to raise her family with decent nutrition, sanitation and housing? Education is a luxury (even public schools cost money), and women rarely see the inside of a schoolroom. So when there is

any kind of political discussion, people want to know how it will change their lives; will it give them food or drinking water or better sanitation?

In the late 1970s, the government faced wide-spread unrest. The students' movement was calling for, among other things, liberalization of the education system and a move toward a multiparty democracy. There were strikes and demonstrations that ended in clashes with the governmental forces. Some of the government offices were bombed and many demonstrators were killed. As the situation grew worse, the King was forced to hold elections in which the people could vote for either a partyless or multiparty system of government. Those in favor of the multiparty system felt that this would give people a real voice in the direction of the development of the country, whereas the ones against felt that it would only create further unrest by opening up the country to outside agitators. The King supported the status quo, saying that with him as head of state and a partyless system, there would be peace and stability in Nepal. The people, believing in the power of the King, voted for the partyless system.

Although the system of government didn't change after these elections, there were changes in the political lives of people, most notably a liberalization in the political climate—there are more newspapers that voice an opinion different from the official governmental one and more open political discussions, and there is a movement toward more popular representation in government.

The situation described in this article by a Nepali prisoner, Durga Pokhrel, is not particular to Nepal. The holding of prisoners who either have no formal charges against them or are uninformed of these charges is the plight of many women and men around the world. Without the economic resources for legal defense and lacking knowledge of their legal rights, many prisoners live out their lives in prison due to bureaucratic errors and/or the complete indifference of the legal and prison system. Women are often convicted of crimes they did not commit, serving out jail sentences for a family member who is considered economically and socially more valuable. And all around the world women are imprisoned for taking control of their lives and bodies against the wishes of governments and legislators.

(The following is from an article by Durga Pokhrel from *Manushi*, an Indian women's bimonthly, May/June 1980.)

The four walls and the skies alone bear witness to the lyrical sentiments of women prisoners in Central Jail. Perhaps the winds carry it away. I too have listened to their wail. I kept the beat one Saturday evening. It was their song. Their dance. A reflection of their sorrows, frustrations, dissatisfaction. No joke, this. Twenty years in jail. But jokes are still made.

A whim, and the doors close behind them. Juveniles, young and elderly women. A total of 77, besides me. Thirty-nine charged with murder, 22 are mental

patients. Twelve serve the equivalent of life terms for abortion—treated as murder in our country. Two have been jailed for prostitution. One is a thief. Another a political prisoner with criminal charges against her. I am there as a transferee, from detention under investigation at Hanuman Dhoka cell, to Central Jail.

One more for company. I was watched with excitement as I was ordered to sit on the ledge facing the door to the headwoman's room and the jail doors closed behind me.

I watched, stunned, as women in various stages of undress were before me. I did not speak. I learnt to accept such nakedness along with the laughter and joy among them. A gesture, and I acknowledged their welcome. The clock struck six. I was taken to a room. Meena Khadka—a student from



the local Padma Kanya Campus—and two other women spending 10 and 16 years for murder were my cell mates. Meena was released two days after my arrival.

The jail bureaucracy is not much different from the one that one comes across everywhere in Nepal. The difference perhaps is that here one finds a formidable bureaucracy of sorrows. How else can one explain the bureaucracy prevalent among these women spending 16 year jail terms, barred from the world outside the prison walls? Only the *chowkidari*, a woman prisoner who has been appointed to be the guard, has relative freedom of movement.

Eat lunch by eight in the morning. Dinner by four in the afternoon. Cook on separate firewood stoves provided for seven or eight in each room. One must, of course, cook for oneself. Hence, for a while, there is a lot of smoke. Smoke that could kill by suffocation. The matron must grant permission to move out from the cell after six in the evening, otherwise the penalty is severe. There are iron shackles as big as wheels. Legs are firmly shackled to it. And, for a few days, the offender is prevented from moving about. Torturous. And then there are punishments of the traditionally accepted manner, too. Beatings, whippings... are a convention.

For us, the misuse of power and the suppression of inequalities is but a way of life, everywhere. Prevention of crime and social evils have been rendered difficult in the current Nepalese environment. No remedy can be provided in the absence of a purposeful process for reforms. But an environment for reforming criminals is a much more distant task when there are many behind bars spending lives in jail for crimes they have not committed, but have been forced to confess. Who else but the police and the village headmen enforce jail terms in villages? These victims of poverty do not possess the means to bribe.

Yes, they give their youth to the government in Nepal—and spend their lives cursing the village elite and authorities for their fate—these women of between 12 and 20 who serve life terms charged with murder. Noon Maya Gurung of Mai Majhua Ilam is 28, and has served 16 years already. At the age of 12 she was accused of murder and convicted for life. Her sister-in-law is said to have been the victim of homicide. She does not know who the killer was, nor did she ever get to see the dead body. She remembers one particular instruction: "You are a small child of 12. The police will keep you for four or five days. And then you can come back." She left with the policeman. Her thumb prints signed a paper. She is unaware of what followed. She says the first few years were pleasant. Sometimes one jail, sometimes another. And then, finally to Central Jail in Kathmandu. She had grown up by then. For her, it was a stunning discovery that she was serving 20 years for murder.

And then there is Nanda Maya Gurung of Sahu Gaon, Nuwakot. Her features at 33 give more than a hint of her good looks in 1967. She was arrested for

investigation in a case involving the murder of her cousin. The police found her attractive. Attempted rape. She resisted. And so the 20 year-old woman was deemed to have been guilty of murder. A 20 year life term followed.

Budhamaya from Nuwakot has already served two or three years in jail but is merely 14 or 15. The child-wife was unfortunate to have lost her mother-in-law while she was away visiting her parents. She was brought to her husband's house and blamed for the murder. A girl yet to attain puberty was made victim of a sinister plot. There are many more women with similar fates. A little legal aid could, perhaps, release them. But they are poor and any remaining initiative for freedom is killed when they are told that the date for pleading a review of their cases has long since passed.

There are other tales of woe in jail. For two women over 80, a last wish is to die outside the jail compound. They say they have seen too many dead bodies rot inside the jail grounds. Many women are serving life terms for abortion. Quite a contrast, this. Millions are being spent by the authorities on family planning programmes. Pretentious meetings and conferences are held regularly where the legalization of abortion is a recurring theme. But there are still women who are jailed—accused of murder, for abortion.

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**"She insists that she did not confess to what she had not done. She asked me to go through her papers and explain why she was serving a 20 year jail term."**

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Jarina says she was a cook in a well-established Kathmandu family household. Sexual relations with the family chauffeur resulted in a pregnancy. Her employers assured her that this was nothing serious. Her baby was still born eight months into pregnancy. It was deemed that she was a murderer. A 20 year jail term was imposed, and ten years remain.

Says Shanti of Birgunj, after her husband and his other wife fled after aborting her child, "I was severely beaten by the police, tortured at bayonet point." The marks remain on her body. She insists that she did not confess to what she had not done. She asked me to go through her papers and explain why she was serving a 20 year jail term. I read the papers and it was a confession that she, and no one else, had killed the child. The confession was signed with her thumb print. She is illiterate. Janaki Subedi of Syangja confesses to the abortion of a five month old fetus. But she was beaten until she confessed that the baby was not five, but ten months old. She serves a 20 year jail term, begun in 1976.

Bal Manjari Acharya, 25, says she has already served three and a half years in jail and admits to killing a former military man. The Subedar was known to prey on young women in the village. She hacked him to pieces with a khukri (a long, curved knife) when he attempted to rape her. She collected two of her friends on the way to the police station to confess the killing and hand over the weapon. The police concluded that the murder was premeditated and that her two friends had conspired in the killing. All three were given five year jail terms.

There are six or seven women locked in a single cell. One relieves oneself in a corner of the cell. There is no water provided. We avoid looking at this source of extreme nausea. The insane, hence, need not attempt a return to sanity. They would prefer lunacy in these conditions. There are two or three who say they are not really mad. "We are not mad," they plead. "Free us." Such cries are interpreted as their sickness having gotten worse. They are beaten. They weep more. They are bound to the iron wheel outside. How then, can one help but sympathise with the lunatics when the prevalent conditions make the sane insane?

Lice and ticks have coarsened the bodies of women in the lunatic section. It is not difficult to see this since they prefer to stay naked. Sanity is difficult when the sane and insane must live in the same cell. Mad women shout, the sane inmates learn to shout back in the same way to shut up the insane ones. The premises are not being disinfected properly. There is little provision for proper care of the mentally ill. I had the opportunity to speak with the other inmates, who had concluded that I was an educated person. I asked them to wait till a democracy is won in the country; that it may enable the release of the innocents among them. They prayed for democracy. I assured them that I would take up the cases of those in prison on abortion charges, those imprisoned under-age and those who needed proper review of their cases.

They said in one voice that the prisoners in the men's jail were released when the Queen gave birth to a son. They point out that ten men prisoners were released when the prince observed his first rice-eating ceremony. "Are we the Prime Minister's step-daughter or something?", they ask me. "You must tell this when you are released." □

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- "A Feminist in Nepal: Interview with Manjula Giri," in *Off Our Backs*, Volume XIV, Number 3, March 1984.
- *Dangerous Wives and Sacred Sisters*, by Lynn Bennett, Columbia University Press, 1983.



(A report from *Connexions'* correspondent in Brazil.)

*A Arte Como Processo de Recriação em Presídios* was a theatre project inside a São Paulo women's jail. They produced five plays and, while performing the last play outside jail, the women took the opportunity to escape.

That was in 1983 and the group had been performing for five years. An actress, Maria Rita Freire Costa, initiated the project with the intention of experimenting with drama therapy as a method to ease prisoners' transitions upon their release. The first play was written by 20 women, *Criação Coletiva* [Creative Creation], a reflection of life in prison. The next year they wrote a play about the relations of those locked up in society in general called *Não Jagar Amendoim* [Please Don't Feed the Animals]:

I don't want time to be measured and taken from me, shamelessly until the last moment...of life just for me not to be lost!

I don't want life as it has been nor as it has to be  
I want life  
where I don't have to live contained!

I don't want any conditions  
I only want the right to suffer life!  
I only want the right to laugh about life!  
I only want the right to cry about life!  
I only want the right to scream at life!  
I don't want time to be free  
I want to be free in time

The next play was called *Cela Forte Mulher* [Woman's Solitary Confinement] and it dealt with women's oppression:

I am a locked up woman, but I am no different from you. I have feelings I enjoy life, I want freedom, I want to struggle with you against this invisible prison, in which all women meet each other.

I don't see any difference between you and me, and I believe foremost that you are only free in appearance. Freedom to me is to have a full stomach, a decent house, work and a fair wage. Freedom is the longing to make a living.

Until last year the plays were performed both inside and outside of the prison and were open to the general public. Before the theatre group's grand finale, Freire Costa described the goal of the project: "I don't believe anyone can 'save' another person. The only thing this theater group can achieve is to raise and discuss some of the questions and problems which confront women inmates. I would like them to become more critical, more self-questioning, more analytical. In this sense, we are doing political work." □

## Algeria: Whose Family Law?

(The following is reprinted from *Isis International Women's Journal: Women in Action*, supplement no. 1, June 1984.)

For the first time since independence in 1962, Algerian women took to the streets in protest of the government proposed Family Law. In 1982 a group of women emerged, expressing feminist positions and demanding human rights for women.

The proposed law would have denied Algerian women their civil rights by requiring women to be legally represented by male family members in matters relating to divorce and the right to work. Because of their protest, the Family Law was suspended for a time at least.

Many women have been arrested for their ideas and opinions. The exact number is not known. A group of lawyers is investigating these cases. Among those arrested are Fattouma Ouzagane, Louiza Hannoun and Leila Souidi. They have not violated any law. They were arrested in December 1983, but this was not revealed until March

1984. When the international press began writing about their case, they were transferred to other prisons.

After an international campaign was mounted for the release of these women, they and others were freed from prison. The Committee for the Liberation of Algerian Detainees says that the international campaign was the significant factor in their release. In this sense it was a great success. Nevertheless, the Committee is also stressing that the political situation has not changed substantially; more people are being arrested, and some form of the Family Law, which denies women their rights, will most likely be approved in the near future. □

### Contact:

• Committee for the Liberation of Algerian Detainees  
c/o Marie-Aimée Helie-Lucas  
251 Badhuisweg, 2509 LS, The Hague  
The Netherlands



# Against The Tides



(The following article by Dorette Deutsch is translated and excerpted from *emma*, vol. 6, no. 5, May 1984, a West German feminist monthly.)

Over 600,000 people receive psychiatric treatment in West Germany each year. And those who find their way into it, can't get away from it so easily. Only one in five is released within three months. Two-thirds are institutionalized for more than a year, and one-third remain in institutions more than ten years. To speak of closing down institutions—as did the anti-psychiatry advocates in Italy during the 70s—is not yet possible here. Those few groups and their initiatives which have tried to support the interests of patients and battle the monster of psychiatry, have not been successful in opening the doors of the institutions. Psychiatric reform such as in Italy is dismissed by the West German psychiatric establishment as unworkable. And in Italy, the reform is acutely threatened. What has happened to the people who were released in Italy?

Colorno, a psychiatric institution located in Parma (a city in northern Italy), was once the summer residence of Napoleon's wife. It held 1200 people before it was closed in 1978 due to a new psychiatric law—Law 180. Two hundred and fifty people remain because there is no place else

for them to go; they are the forgotten leftovers of an earlier political struggle. Ten percent of the patients die each year. The institution will really close only when all the patients have died.

In the open ward there are patients who are considered medically "free to go." After Colorno was closed, these patients were sent back to their families but were often refused, so they returned to the institution. After 20 to 40 years of life in an institution, most of them never even venture out into the village.

The youngest patient who is 24, has been there 13 years and is kept on the locked ward at the end of a long hallway. She lives there with 30 very old women whose ages and infirmities have made mental illness hardly apparent. They have absolutely no contact with the outside world.

Anti-psychiatry in the north had its beginnings with the student movement. The students saw an action against Colorno as an action against a repressive society. On February 2, 1969, the Colorno Institution was occupied by medical students for 40 days and nights. Open meetings were held in factories and in different parts of the city. It was pointed out that even without doctors and attendants (who had fled), the patients were able, with assistance from the students, to run the institution

themselves. This gradually convinced the local residents that the patients, labeled as hopelessly insane, were not so helpless after all.

In the 70s, the anti-psychiatry stance was part of the Communist Party of Italy's cultural and political platform. One result of the platform was Law 180 which intended to protect patients, not to protect society from patients. Coinciding with Law 180 was a decentralization of health agencies and the institution of regional centers.

Out-patient care facilities or CIM—*Centri Igiene Mentale* [Mental Health Centers] are now found in every city. Their effectiveness, however, depends on how heavy the patient load is. In Parma, there is one center for its population of 170,000. The centers offer prescription drugs as well as ongoing therapy sessions with a psychiatrist. The CIMs act as patient go-betweens and handle out-patient care after a person is released from a hospital. Since Law 180, general hospitals must set aside a psychiatric ward with 15 beds for short term stays for people in crisis.

Involuntary admissions are valid only if bearing the signature of the town mayor or appropriate social agency representative. A person cannot be held longer than seven days at a time. Each readmission is also limited to seven days. Hospital staffs have many complaints about this system: "The psychiatric wards cannot function in harmony with the rest of the hospital. A week is too short a time, the wards are overburdened!" But when compared with West Germany, where involuntary admissions can be stretched out to two months and many cases remain inside much longer, the rigid one week rule seems to be a good protective measure. People are no longer in danger of being lost and forgotten.

In Parma, several alternative organizations grew out of the anti-psychiatry movement. One of these is *Noi Cooperativa* [Our Cooperative] which was organized in 1979 by a former nurse at Colorno. The city of Parma made a two-story building available to house the collective in Borgo Felino, the city center. It was set up as a protective house for some of the newly released mental patients. The cooperative operates a second hand store and an ironing business where former inmates work.

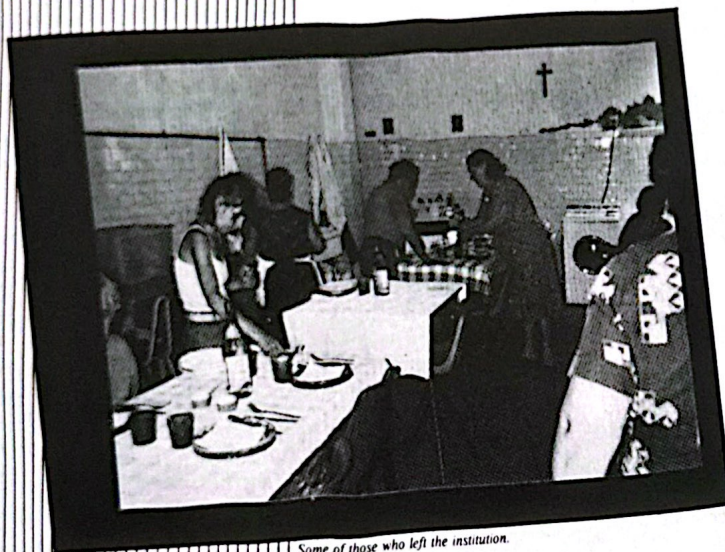
Profits made by the cooperative go to its continued operation. *Noi Cooperativa* is only symbolically independent from the regional mental health center which at present is paying the salaries of the attendants. And in actuality, there is no profit. Out of the money earned from ironing, a certain amount is set aside for the needs of the members.

In Borgo Felino there are only work rooms, no one is supposed to live there. At





In the middle of Parma is the Cooperative NOI [We].



Some of those who left the institution.



They work together and become less dependent through their self-earned money.

first, a bus would bring the women each morning and then would pick them up in the evening to return to Colorno. After one year, some women were placed in social housing and others returned to their families.

The house at Borgo Felino has large bright rooms, and everywhere there are long ironing tables piled with the items to be ironed. It looks very professional. Some of the older women have been so affected by a very long period of institutionalization that they cannot iron very well or very fast. But working, or sometimes simply the appearance of working, gives the day some definition. Work is part of the day. It gives a relationship to a time period; it relates directly to one's self.

So far, *Noi Cooperativa* has helped 200 ex-patients find their way back to an active role in society. It offers them what the institution denied: work and social relationships.

At present, the group has 25 women and five men. The members of the group are cared for at the cooperative during the day. They work, eat, take naps, have conversations, listen to the radio and then they return to their own homes—subsidized housing where two and three women often share an apartment and pay rents as low as \$5 per person. Most of them receive disability compensation of \$50 a month.

The average length of stay varies from a year, five years or longer. One woman told me she just spent six months in a private clinic before coming to the cooperative.

In the afternoon the two attendants sit and play cards with some of the cooperative members. "In our work here we've been able to develop the kind of human relationships that are impossible in some other institutions," says one attendant. "Above all, our primary relationship with the members is one of friendship, not one of patient/caretaker. No one takes psychopharmaceuticals anymore. The important thing about our work is to form a bond, to build a relationship. And there are no psychiatrists. We don't need anyone who pops in once a week and makes an outsider's judgement. At the beginning we had one, but we got rid of him right away."

Organizations like *Noi Cooperativa* arose from and remain linked to a political context. Unfortunately, not all those started are still functioning, and it seems that all the failures find their way into the newspapers. Whether they have succeeded or failed, they owe their existence to the energy of the individuals who fought for them so long against the tide. Anti-psychiatry means giving back autonomy.

*Noi Cooperativa* is functioning because it has become nearly self-sufficient, because there are jobs there and because its founder was willing to take on so much. □

#### Further Resource:

- *Fit To Be Untied*, an extraordinary film about the psychiatric patients after their release from the hospitals in Italy.



(This article was written for *Connexions* by Fereshteh Gol-Mohammadi, August 1984.)

In September 1982, the Islamic Parliament sanctioned The Bill of Retribution as Iran's new criminal law. The bill, which includes a series of bloody punishments, was another surprising shock to Iranians. The law is based on patriarchal relationships which date back to pre-Islamic tribal Arabia, 14 centuries ago. In the case of murder, the bill permits retaliation against a murderer by the murdered person's guardian, traditionally a man.

Article 33 of the bill denies a woman's ability to serve as a witness in the case of premeditated murder. Willful murder "...is proved only on the basis of two righteous men's testimony." This means that if an intentional murder occurs in the presence of hundreds or thousands of women, but no men, it cannot be proven. In the case of non-willful or unintentional murder, two women may testify as one voice only if accompanied by one man's testimony.

The bill also includes provisions for blood-money—money paid to the murdered person's guardian for the loss of that person's life. Blood-money translates into the economic value of someone's life in terms of her/his social and economic position in society. It is the price paid for murdering another human being. Behind the bill is the reasoning that only men have an economic role in society and are the only source of a family's income; women are considered consumers. In the end, a male killer ends up with a higher status than a female victim.

If a man murders a woman, her guardian has the choice of carrying out the retaliation, or demanding the woman's blood-money from the murderer and letting him go free. But, if the guardian of the murdered woman forgives the killer, he can receive the woman's blood-money. If the guardian retaliates and the killer is killed, the guardian has to pay the killer's family one half of his blood-money. Not surprisingly, if a woman kills a man, she is executed.

To legalize the Bill of Retribution in Iran, the regime has converted Iranian courts into Islamic tribunals, and *mullahs* [members of the clergy] are appointed to rule the courts. In cases where non-mullahs are judges, they are supposed to have Islamic knowledge and education to the level of a *Mojtahed* [religious leader].

How these courts determine the amount of blood-money has not been mentioned in the bill or any other official document. What is certain is that the law is being forcefully executed in the courts and blood-money is taken and given. This means that women living in Iran in the 20th century have been sentenced to the legal status they held in the Middle Ages. □

پول خون

## BLOOD MONEY

حقوق مساوی

Fereshteh Gol-Mohammadi

### Further reading:

- In the Shadow of Islam: The Women's Movement in Iran, by A. Tabari and N. Yeganeh, Zed Press-London, 1983.
- Religion and Politics in Muslim Society, by Akbar S. Ahmed, University Press, 1983.

(From *Women's Action Forum Newsletter* No. 5, Lahore, Pakistan, June 1984 and *Manushi*, Indian women's bi-monthly, No. 3, 1984.)

Since January 1983, the Women's Action Forum (WAF) has been actively opposing two proposed laws. The first, the Law of Evidence, requires the testimony of two male witnesses. If two males are not available, then one man and two women are required. The evidence of one woman will only be accepted as a last resort and at the discretion of the judge. This reduces the status of women to half that of men.

The second law, The Law of *Qisas and Diyat* [Retribution and Blood-Money], was passed by the *Majlis-e-Shoora* [Federal Council] in early August 1984. It now waits to be signed by President Zia ul-Haq. The proposed Law of *Qisas and Diyat* further reinforces the lower status of women. Section 10(b) of the proposed law makes two Muslim male witnesses mandatory for proof of premeditated murder and completely excludes women from testifying as witnesses. Section 25(b) fixes the blood-money for a female victim of murder at half of that of a male. This is the worst kind of discrimination especially when a female offender is liable to the same punishment as a male. While the economic liabilities of females are equal to those of males, in the matter of loss of life, they count for only half.

There is opposition to the return to Islamic values by the women of Pakistan. WAF, along with other women's organizations, has concentrated its efforts on stopping these laws from being passed, and has been instrumental in the continued delays that these laws have faced.

WAF held a protest meeting on August 14, 1984, Pakistan's Independence Day, in Lahore [Pakistan's second largest city]. The protest meeting included women from ten women's organisations. As well, WAF is organising an ongoing intensive letter and telegramme campaign to prevent the signing of the law by President Zia.

Some people feel this issue is fraught with danger for President Zia in a country where 52% of the population is female. They say that unlike politicians, who have been unable to mount an effective national movement against the president because of their own disunity, women opposed to Islamization are united throughout the country.

The Women's Action Forum urgently requests concerned people to support their cause by sending letters and telegrammes of protest against this inhumane and discriminatory law against women. Please write to:

Gen. Zia ul-Haq  
President of Pakistan  
CMLA Secretariat  
Rawalpindi/Islamabad  
Pakistan



# The Awakening

## Taiwan



It is not certain how many political prisoners are being held in Taiwan's prisons. Estimates range from 300-400; some have been jailed since the 1940s. Lü Hsiu-lien, a well-known Taiwanese feminist was arrested in March 1980 for sedition and has been imprisoned since that date.

(Article by Kaho Satomi excerpted from *Asian Women's Liberation*, bi-annual English translation of the Japanese periodical by the same name, no. 4, August 1981. Other information supplied by Gail Baker, member of the Amnesty International group working in support of Lü Hsiu-lien.)

The people of Taiwan, presently living under martial law imposed by the Kuomintang Party (KMT), have been kept silent for over 30 years. In the 1970s, however, a struggle for democratization quietly began. With the November 1977 election, the non-KMT party began to gather great strength. This strength was expressed in Chung-li when 10,000 people protested the unfairness of local elections and the government's oppression of human rights.

The proposed elections of December 23, 1978 held a lot of promise. The competitive interparty speech meetings of candidates for the non-KMT were heavily attended by enthusiastic crowds. This support contrasted vividly with the lack of support for the KMT, which was unable to hold a speech meeting for lack of participants. Ultimately, the election was postponed indefinitely, supposedly due to the threat felt from the normalization of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and China.

Although repression became severe, non-KMT forces continued to work for democratization. On December 10, two weeks before the elections were to take place, a Human Rights Day memorial gathering was held in Kaohsiung and 30,000

participants clashed with police. In connection with the Kaohsiung incident, 47 people were imprisoned including Lü Hsiu-lien, a leader of the women's liberation and democratization movements. After undergoing questioning, as well as psychological and physical torture, she was tried in a military court in April 1980 and sentenced to 12 years in prison.

### LU HSIU-LIEN

After graduation from the law program at the National Taiwan University, Lü Hsiu-lien traveled to the U.S. for further study. She returned to Taiwan in 1971, to work as section chief in Taiwan's Commission on Law and Regulations, creating laws in health care and pollution control. Sustained by her own talent and hard-working spirit, and her ambition to rise ahead, she appeared to be a promising KMT official. How did she come to follow a different road that would lead her to prison? The road she took embodied her heartfelt anger toward discrimination against women.

Lü Hsiu-lien grew up with the love of her family. Still, she often heard her parents say, "It's too bad you weren't born a man." Her natural response to this was considered rebellious: "What is wrong with being a woman? Why can't I do the things a man can do?"

As a student who knew nothing other than law, Lü Hsiu-lien's eyes were opened to a completely different world when she traveled abroad. She encountered the women's liberation movement which was gaining momentum at the time. She found that questions such as, "What is wrong with being a woman?" were recognized by women universally. She returned to Taiwan with new outlooks.

It was then that she coined the phrase *Xin Nüxingzhuyi* (feminism). Issues put forward at that time included the abolition of the division of household duties according to sex; provision of jobs for women to ensure their economic independence; and the establishment of welfare facilities such as daycare centers.

*Xin Nüxingzhuyi* was a new concept for women in Taiwan and these demands were virtually an awakening to women's liberation. Lü Hsiu-lien established a meeting place for women in Taipei, a central location for the formation of a contemporary women's association. Opposition from the KMT, however, stifled this goal.

Lü Hsiu-lien's attendance as a representative from Taiwan at the 1975 U.N. International Women's Year Confer-

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**"Xin Nüxingzhuyi (feminism) was a new concept for women in Taiwan and these demands were virtually an awakening to women's liberation."**

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ence held in Mexico City allowed her to experience the vibrant energy of women all around the world. Upon returning to Taiwan in the fall, she resigned from her government position in order to devote all her energy to the women's liberation movement. She established a women's publishing house to circulate ideas on women's liberation. Eighteen books were published in quick succession including her own important study, *On New Feminism*. It was banned six months after its appearance. In order to challenge the traditional roles for men and women, she held a cooking contest for men, and sponsored symposiums for women which she called "tea parties outside of the kitchen." She was constantly busy conducting surveys. One symposium organized by Lü Hsiu-lien and other feminists, entitled "After Marriage," was attended by 20,000 people. The symposium concerned problems in the home, education, wife/mother in law relationships and other





Michaela

issues affecting women.

Lü Hsiu-lien deeply felt the necessity of spreading the movement to women of the lower and middle classes. She knew all too well that Taiwan's industrial economy was supported by the exploitation of young women workers, and that prostitution tourism provided a main source of foreign currency. She also started a hotline in Taipei and Kaohsiung enlisting volunteer help from doctors, lawyers and scholars who provided counseling to women in trouble. This service extended real help to women of the lowest social status.

There was, of course, opposition. Lü Hsiu-lien began to meet many obstacles such as the banning of her lectures and books. As the movement reached out to working class women, pressure from the KMT increased.

In 1977, nearly exhausted, Lü Hsiu-lien left Taiwan for the third time and began studies at Harvard. There she wrote two theses, one on the legalization of abortion and another about the joint ownership of property between husband and wife. While conducting this research, she spent long hours in libraries reading about contemporary Taiwanese history and international politics, awakening in her feelings of patriotism which she combined with her efforts for women's liberation.

After a year, spurred by an intense feeling of nationalism, she made the decision to return to her country. Upon her return to Taiwan in December 1978, she came forward as a candidate for the National Assembly. Along with sympathizers of the non-KMT who were continuing the movement for democracy, the *Formosa Magazine Association* (FMT) was established, and Lü Hsiu-lien became deputy director.

On December 10, 1979, at the Kaohsiung Human Rights Day Memorial Gathering, Lü Hsiu-lien poured out her heart to an enthusiastic audience. Three days later she was arrested.

.....

It was her involvement with *Formosa* and the activities of the FMT that led to Lü Hsiu-lien's arrest and conviction. Three days after the arrests at the Kaohsiung Human Rights Day Memorial Gathering, Lü Hsiu-lien and seven others were detained and held for ten weeks before being indicted. In March 1980 she was tried by the Taiwan Garrison Command's Military Court on charges of attempted sedition, attempted subversion of the government by illegal means and subversive activities. At her trial, Lü Hsiu-lien described the interrogations to which she had been subjected, including threats made against her family, physical abuse and threats of

**"In an unjust society, prison is the last repository for men and women of conscience."**

her own execution. It was under these conditions that she signed a confession.

In April 1980 Lü Hsiu-lien was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment and 10 years deprivation of civil rights. She shares a cell with Chen Ju, another of the women arrested at the Kaohsiung Gathering, in a prison in Taiwan called the Jenai Educational Experimental Institute. Chen Ju is a librarian and writer who worked as a secretary for an opposition member (non-KMT) of the Provincial Assembly of Taiwan. She was involved in the publishing of two books, *Long Live Elections* and *Literature of the Opposition* which were both banned. She was also associated with *Formosa* and is serving a sentence similar to Lü Hsiu-lien's.

The Jenai Institute is educational in a particular sense. According to official government information, prisoners spend several hours daily studying Chinese language, history, geography and politics. Recreational activities include physical exer-

cise, practice in essay writing and in public speaking in both Chinese and English. "Essay writing" means writing favorable reviews of specially assigned material.

In Spring 1982, due to Lü Hsiu-lien's deteriorating health, Amnesty International organized an international letter campaign demanding she receive proper health care. It was feared that the thyroid cancer she had been treated for in 1974 might be recurring. Since then her health has improved but still is not good.

Her cellmate Chen Ju wrote from prison, "It is my wish that before long all oppressed and struggling people can be free. I hope that my beloved Taiwanese brothers and sisters will soon live in equality, liberty and democracy. Legal institutions should be symbols of social justice, not instruments by means of which rulers manipulate the people...Although I have been subjected to endless insult and humiliation, my heart is without remorse or animosity. In an unjust society, prison is the last repository for men and women of conscience. Sitting here I continue to maintain a strong belief in the importance of encouraging the people to struggle for their rights." □

#### Further reading and contacts:

- *Taiwan Communique, International Committee for Human Rights in Taiwan, Box 91542, 2509 EC, The Hague, The Netherlands.*
- *Amnesty International/USA 101, Box 4731, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87196.*

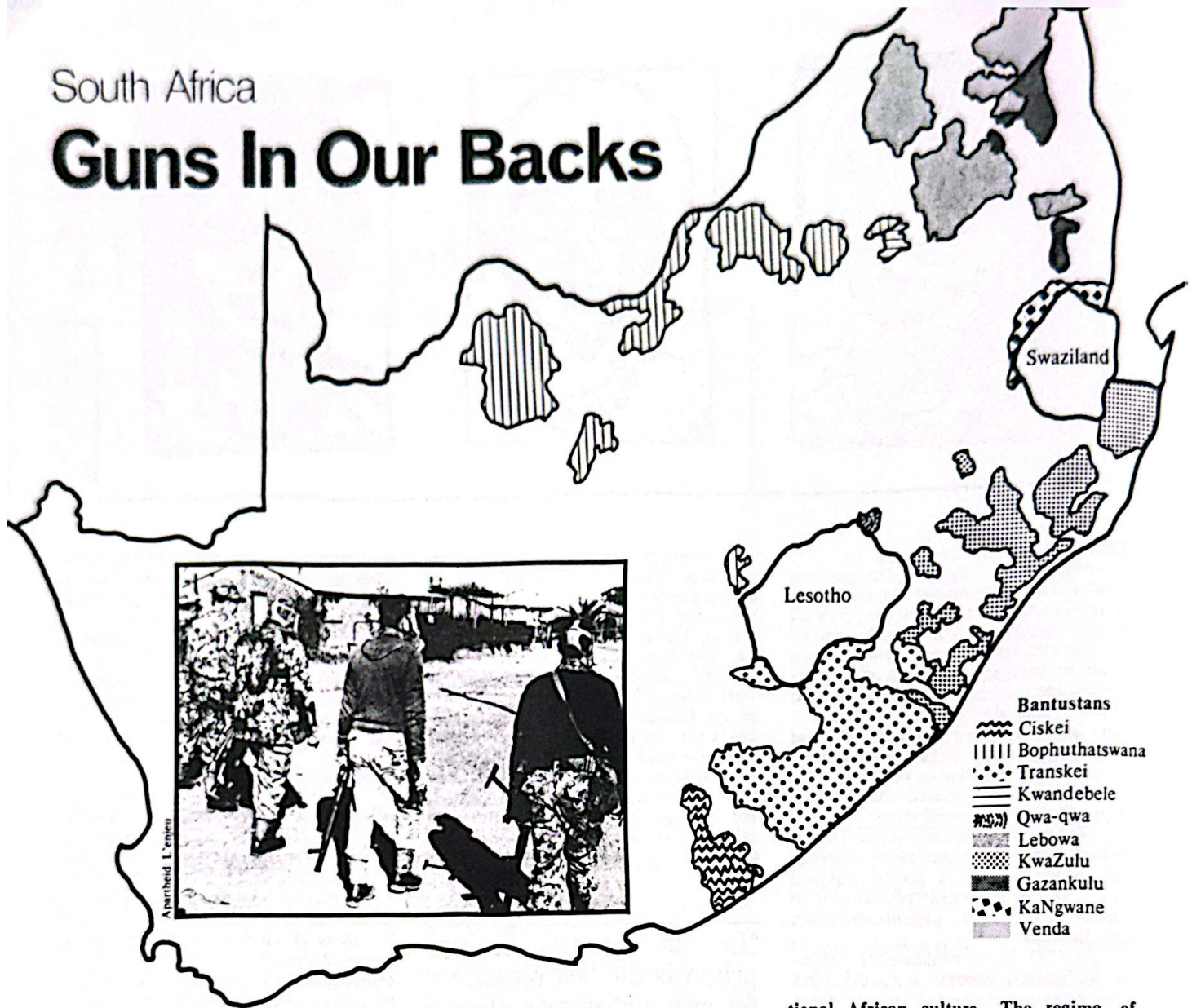
Send letters expressing concern about the case of Lü Hsiu-lien and Chen Ju to:

President Chiang Chin-kuo  
Chiehshou Hall  
Chungking S. Road  
Taipei, TAIWAN

General Chen Shou-shan  
Taiwan Garrison Command  
172 Po-ai Road  
Taipei, TAIWAN



# Guns In Our Backs



"For convenience, the Blacks in the White Area who are normally regarded as non-productive...and should be given the opportunity of settling in a national state [bantustan/reserve], are classified as follows:

(i) The aged, the disabled, widows and women with dependent children, as well as other families who do not qualify...for housing...in an urban Black residential area;...

(ii) Blacks on White farms who become unfit for work...;

(iii) Professional Blacks such as doctors, attorneys, agents, merchants, industrialists, etc...

From Government General Circular No. 2, 1982

(Testimonial reprinted from *Forced Removals in South Africa*, Surplus People Project Reports vol. 2 of 5, 1983. Introduction information from "African Women Under Apartheid" published by The Africa Fund.)

Apartheid is a system of white minority rule whose effect is the imprisonment of an entire population. Jails, bantustans [reserves] and bannings are some of the more obvious manifestations of this system, all enforced by a web of legislation that denies any form of basic human rights to the African population. One of the major mechanisms developed by the apartheid government to isolate and control this population has been to remove those it deems "superfluous" out of what it claims to be the white areas into segregated black areas. Since 1960, some 3,500,000 people have been forcibly removed from their homes and relocated in this way. The majority have been removed to ten bantustans [based on former African reserves and accounting for only 13% of the land of South Africa]. About 54% of the African population—a little under 11 million people—presently live in bantustans, compared to 39% in 1960.

Typically, bantustans are located on eroded land, away from the urban centers and are unable to support the population assigned to them. One claim of this system is that it is trying to restore tradi-

tional African culture. The regime, of course, dictates just what is "traditional" and uses its definitions to justify the restriction of women's mobility and lifestyle in ways which have nothing to do with African history and values. Families are split up, women are left to try to eke out a living for themselves and their children by working the impoverished land. For the most part it is African men who are allowed to work in urban areas and the restriction of women to the reserves keeps an African population from establishing itself in white areas. Unemployment among rural women is very high so that despite their poverty very few are able to find paid employment.

The following account was told to members of the Surplus People Project, a group of South African researchers exposing the realities of forced removals since 1960. Mrs. Y lived in Doriskraal, which had been an African reserve since 1835. Since it now falls outside the boundaries of the Ciskei bantustan, as demarcated under apartheid, the people were moved some 300 kilometres to Elukhanyweni, a relocation site in the Ciskei in 1976/77. The 400 families resisted and the army was called in to forcibly remove them.



Mrs. Y was initially not prepared to talk to us at all. She said that she did not trust whites, nor did she like them. However, she changed her mind when we had already left and called us back. She was not prepared to give her name and she abruptly ended the conversation after only half an hour. This is her story as she told it to us.

I am 52 years old. I was born and grew up in Kareedorp. I did not have a father, or if I had one I never knew him. My mother had ten children. She did the washing for Dr. Steyn in Kareedorp. I went to the school at Assegaaibos. When I was 15, we moved to Nuweplaas—my mother and all the children and the man she was living with then. I can't remember who he was, there were so many men. I don't remember much of my childhood, there were all the men and the children. Oh yes, yes I remember the eclipse of the sun, it was in Kareedorp. It wasn't dark but one could see the difference. I remember that.

Then I got married. I can't remember how old I was. We were married for 20 years, we were happily married for 20 years. When we got married we moved to Doriskraal; my husband worked on the roads. He was a bit older than I was, we married in church. I have nine children, the eldest is 31, the youngest is 12 years. We were very happy in Doriskraal. The only thing that was not so very good was that my husband was ill most of the time. He suffered from asthma. All the years he suffered from it and he worked on the roads, he never gave in. He went to work every morning, and some mornings he could hardly breathe. My husband was a good, brave man. A good man. He looked after us, he provided for us all those years in Doriskraal, he never gave in. Here, in this place [the reservation], he gave in. That is why I don't want to talk to you because if you think about it, it is your people who did it. Here in Elukhanyweni he just gave in and stayed in bed the whole time and then he died—last year, in July, early in the morning he died.

It happened like this. The white people from the government came to us in Doriskraal. There were meetings in which the white people from the government told us that we had to come here. Oh, they made big promises. They made big promises but we did not believe them. We had heard this Elukhanyweni is a dry place, we did not want to move. They promised us land and houses but we did not believe them. Since when have the whites given Africans land and big houses? It was all a pack of lies and we knew it from the beginning. At another meeting they said that Doriskraal belonged to the coloureds but when you look at it, when you look at history you can see that we Africans were here first. We were bitter, yes, very bitter, and the fear was always with us. It took years. Some people gave in because of the fear and the threats but we thought we had not harmed anyone, and we thought if you had to be killed simply because you wanted to stay on your own land, then you had to be killed.

Some of our leaders stood up in these meetings and told the whites that we did not want to go. But then they came with

soldiers and police and dogs and guns and lorries and people were put in jail and beaten up. The police packed our things and demolished our houses, and we were pushed into the buses, guns in our backs. The people cried. They weren't even angry anymore.

We came here late that afternoon. That was in 1977. Our things were off-loaded and each family was given the number of a house. We looked for a place to sleep because, you see, we were given houses which consisted of two rooms. We were 11 people and we had to sleep in two rooms. Now, I don't know what you people think of us. You lie to us, you cheat us, you make promises which you never fulfil, you take away our land, you murder our husbands and children, yes murder. I say murder because that is what you do, and you treat us the same way you treat your animals. You put 11 people in two rooms, you put grown-up men with their grown-up sisters and then what do you expect? I can understand why my husband died. He died of shame and sorrow.

My husband couldn't find work here, and he was ill. My sons found jobs, but they got so little money. And that is another thing. You people told us that it will be easier for the children here, in Elukhanyweni. You said that the young people wouldn't suffer here because there are many opportunities and jobs for them. Well, they suffer, they suffer. There are no jobs, the children die.

Now I don't want to talk to you anymore. Nothing can take me back to my land, nothing can bring my husband back. Leave the past now. It is over. □

#### Contacts:

- *The Africa Fund*, 198 Broadway, New York, NY 10038, (212)962-1210.
- *The Discarded People*, a film about South Africa's Bantustans. Contact The Southern Africa Media Center, 630 Natoma St., San Francisco, CA 94103 (415)621-6196.

#### Further Readings

- *We Make Freedom*, accounts by women in South Africa, by Beata Lipman, Pandora, 1984.
- *Women in Resistance in South Africa*, by Cheryl Walker, Onyx Press, 1983.
- *The Surplus People*, by Laurine Platzky and Cheryl Walker, Raven Press, Johannesburg, in press.

#### AND IT'S ALL LEGAL

- The Internal Security Act of 1982 basically outlaws protest and allows indefinite detention without charge or trial, random police searches, suppression of the media and any organization alleged to be threatening to public safety, and restriction of rights of communication and association of any person [banning].

- The Abolition of Passes Act applies only to Africans and is the key to the administration of apartheid and labor control. All Africans over the age of 16 must carry a pass book with a record of bantustan identification, employment, permits to enter a white area and taxes. Pass laws restrict the movement of Africans.

Pass law offenders make up 40% of the daily prison population of about 10,000—the highest per capita "criminal rate" of any country in the world. For those unable to pay their fines, many people are imprisoned for two to three months. Families are separated, mothers from their children, and the children are taken away to "a place of safety," a different institution.

- The Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 reserve 87% of the country's territory to whites. [South Africa's population is 16% white.]

(Information from South African Fact Sheet, January 1984, published by The Africa Fund.)



Family in Cross Roads, South Africa, 1978.



# Armagh

## Ireland

The British invasion of Ireland in 1171 under Henry II established Ireland as Britain's first colony and instituted a centuries-long systematic exploitation of the native Gaelic and Catholic cultures through land thefts and by settling Protestants from Scotland and England. The Irish have never taken British colonialism lightly and over the centuries have fought back. In 1922, after a ten year civil war against the British, Ireland was divided, with boundaries drawn artificially to favor the Protestant population in the North. The Republic of Ireland with a Catholic majority, covers three provinces with 26 counties and is politically independent of the United Kingdom. Northern Ireland has the six counties of Ulster province with a Protestant majority and a loyalist mentality. Between 1922 and 1973, Northern Ireland had Home Rule [a semi-independent Northern Irish Parliament] but was still bound politically and economically to the British Crown. Its Parliament practiced legal discrimination against the Catholics.

Prior to 1968, there were relatively few people in prison in Northern Ireland. Then the first civil rights demonstrations, modeled on those of the U.S., were held drawing support from the vast majority of Catholics. Ostensibly to protect the Catholic (Nationalist/Republican) population from Protestant/Loyalist reprisals, the British Army entered Northern Ireland in 1969. Escalating violence by the British against the Catholics revived the dormant Irish Republican Army. The British, not interested in negotiating a withdrawal of troops, abolished Home Rule. The British Army still occupies Northern Ireland. All military, political, cultural and social policies fall under the responsibility of the Northern

Ireland Office which is mainly staffed by English civil servants and run by the Secretary for Northern Ireland who is appointed by the Prime Minister.

Britain's response to Republican activity was to enact legislation between 1971 and 1976 denying civil liberties for those arrested on political (considered terrorist by the British) offenses. For example, denial of trial by jury, restrictions on bail releases, acceptance of statements by anonymous informants and admission of confessions. Protestant activists who would like to see an end to occupation have also been affected. However, Catholics overwhelmingly bear the burden.

As a concession to the growing political prisoners' rights movement, Special Category Status (political prisoner status) was allowed in 1974 but was abolished in 1976 for new prisoners who were treated as criminals. This culminated in the organized Blanket Protests of 1980-82, when the male Republican prisoners in Long Kesh prison (The Maze) who reside in H-Block, refused to wear prison clothing. Forbidden their own clothes, they stayed nude in their cells wearing a blanket when they had visitors. As a result, the prisoners lost "privileges" — exercise, use of toilets, reading materials, letters, packages, etc. Understanding the need for solidarity among all prisoners, the women Republican prisoners in Armagh refused to work as well as wash, shower or mop their cells. In November 1980, the first hunger strike began and three women from Armagh joined. The British government agreed to negotiate, but in bad faith. In 1981, the second hunger strike began, and 11 male prisoners died.

The prisoners' demands included: to be treated as political prisoners; to wear their own clothes; no prison work; free association; segregation from non-political prisoners; to organize their educational, recreational and visiting facilities; restoration of full remission or parole.

Northern Ireland now has one of the six highest incarceration rates in the world,

mostly comprised of the minority Catholic population. The European Court of Human Rights has found Great Britain guilty of "inhuman and degrading treatment of Irish prisoners in Ulster," although Britain insists the prisons are among the best in Europe.

(The following article is excerpted from *Round-Up* #5, October 1983, a feminist newsletter published collectively by Irish women in Dublin. They have since decided to change their format to a national magazine to be called *Eavesdrop*.)

In Armagh, Republican women prisoners are the victims of particular sexual abuse through the strip searches routinely carried out on remand [not yet sentenced] prisoners. Extensive bruising and other injuries have been caused by these violent and degrading searches. In one period from November 9, 1982 to March 1, 1983, 772 strip searches were carried out on 97 women.

In February 1983 there were 27 Republican women prisoners with five on remand. Only one has Special Category Status.

The Republican women can wear their own clothes and have one hour of exercise and one and a half hours for open association a day. Otherwise there are few facilities or privileges. Work consists of sewing shirts and dungarees with a go-slow [work slowdown] on at the moment as the women refuse to fulfill the daily quotas. Education is almost non-existent except for Irish language and history classes carried out by the prisoners themselves. The only craft work is knitting.

During the no-wash protest of February 1980 to March 1981, the women were locked in their cells 23 hours a day with the windows boarded up. They were forbidden group association, reading material [except for the Bible], radio and television. They lost remission of their sentences because of their protest.

After the no-work protest, Republican prisoners were split up in single cells throughout the prison. The present gover-



Republican prisoners parade inside the jail in honour of IRA Volunteer "Dee" Dalaney.

Republican prisoner Mairead Farrell in her cell during the no-wash strike. The photo was taken with a camera smuggled inside.



nor has also set up an isolation unit where women are held in solitary for weeks, even months. No reason is ever given, and the unit seems to be designed not for punishment but as a control unit. Loss of privileges and remission is common for minor and imaginary offenses.

(The following description of daily life in Armagh is excerpted from the book *Tell Them Everything...* by Margaretta D'Arcy, published by Pluto Press, London, 1981. D'Arcy, an actress, political activist and citizen of the Republic of Ireland, was sentenced to three months in Armagh in 1980 for refusing to pay a fine she received after having been arrested outside of Armagh while demonstrating with an Irish feminist group called Women Against Imperialism. She was in prison during the no-wash, no-work protests and the beginning of the hunger strike.)

On our ground floor there are about eighteen cells on each side, two guard-rooms each with a table, chair, an electric kettle and a small hotplate for the use of the screws [guards].

In general there are two girls in each 8' by 11' cell. All the fittings have been removed. Each ordinary cell contains two iron beds...two thin foam rubber mattresses; three grey blankets; two pillows, sometimes made of straw; one plastic po, [chamber pot] —some have lids; a large uncovered plastic bowl for slops [leftover food and waste]...We have one blue plastic mug each and a thermos flask, a toothbrush, toothpaste, comb and a transparent plastic container which once contained disinfectant but is now used for water.

7:30 a.m.: The female and male screws come on the wing, our master-locks are unlocked, the 'spy' is opened and we are counted. Then the long process of going for breakfast begins. Only one cell is unlocked at a time, which means that only two girls are out on the wing at one time. The screws line the wing as we go down to collect the food—16 to 20 female screws. The male screws are upstairs standing by the entrance.

First the cell is opened. We push the door back and empty the thermos flask from last night into the bowl which already contains our overnight urine. We then

throw these slops out onto the wing, avoiding the screws who are standing there. If we were to throw it at them, they would instantly crowd in and attack the individual prisoner...You take the blue mug and thermos flask, hand the mug over at the hotplate where there is an open container of milk. A ladleful is poured into the mug, a quarter pint each. You also hand over the flask which is filled with tea from an urn...

Pale blue plastic bowls are laid out, one-third full of cornflakes. Beside them is a wall safe with margarine [margarine], sugar and jam. There is also a breadbin...When you are back [in the cell], the door is locked, the peep-hole is bolted...This process takes about an hour and a half.

At 12:00 dinner was up. The long process of unlocking and locking, slops being thrown out and prisoners going two at a time to collect their dinner, one plastic fork, plastic knife, plastic plate and pudding bowl. This was the time for messages between the cells; as soon as the cell was open, one would dart to deliver or to ask someone in another cell to deliver a message to yet another cell when they came out. Occupants would call out for a visit, we'd be scurrying up and down, through the slops—trying not to skid—all amid the clamour of the screws calling to get the women back...

There is no regular order for unlocking the cells. Doors are chosen at random, so you never know, except by the jangling outside your cell when your particular door is going to be opened...

2:00 p.m.: Exercise time. More locking and unlocking doors. Each time we go out we empty our slops. After each exit the male crims [criminals] come on the wing to clean up the slops...Between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m. the post arrives. Unlock doors, lock doors, wrong doors, wrong letters. 4:00 o'clock—tea... on Wednesday and Saturday the visitors' bus arrives with post, tissues, stamps and religious magazines. More unlocking, signing for parcels. 5:30 p.m. doors open again for plates; 7:30 p.m. supper. Water containers are filled up at this time. No one is allowed out of the cells after 7:30... 8:30 p.m. the master-lock on each cell is clicked; no-one on the wing can open them. The master locks are kept in a central office.

9 p.m.: The Rosary in Irish; then cal-

ling out for that evening's 'entertainment'. 10 p.m.: Entertainment begins. Three nights a week Irish language classes; a lecture; a quiz; bingo; and one free night. At 12 p.m. we say goodnight, there is no more shouting, we whisper in our cells, write our letters, read our magazines...When it gets dark the enormous arc lamps surrounding the prison light up, the guard-dogs come into the yard barking...Every hour during the twenty-four the telephone rings, for a screw to reassure the office, police, army barracks, that there are no riots. At dawn the prison is buzzed for fifteen minutes by a helicopter; it swoops over and over the jail, encircling it. At about 9 p.m. practice alarms go off to coincide with alarms in the army barracks and the R.U.C. station [Royal Ulster Constabulary].

Every fourth Monday a screw opens your cell door at 8:30 a.m. and says, "Work?" No reply. She goes out. Between 10:30 and 11:00 the Governor comes around for what is known as Ajudication. It is in fact a trial...For refusing to work you lose remission for four weeks...[and] the following privileges: films, three visits, books, television, radio, parcels, etc. It's all rattled off at such a speed it's impossible to hear...

On Saturdays the doctor comes in, says "How're ye ladies?" and walks out... The nurse comes round with a tray of pills, stands at each cell and gives them out to those who want them. [They are routinely refused by the prisoners.] Once a month on a fixed day, whether we are menstruating or not, she gives out either sanitary towels or tampons (you can't have both). The quantity is the same for each prisoner, no matter how heavy or light her period. Prison visitors come once a fortnight but do not visit the cells. Father Murray comes twice a week to visit each cell in rotation. There is Confession once a week, on Saturday; Mass on Sunday...The St. Vincent de Paul Society is permitted to send in a couple of copies of *The Irish News* at irregular intervals and also some Sunday newspapers...Father Murray has provided Bibles for the prisoners and their relatives send in religious magazines. This is all the reading matter permitted for those on the protest. □

#### Further Readings:

- Tell Them Everything..., by Margaretta D'Arcy, Pluto Press, England, 1981.
- "A Farewell to Armed Patriarchy," *Connexions* #1, Summer, 1981.



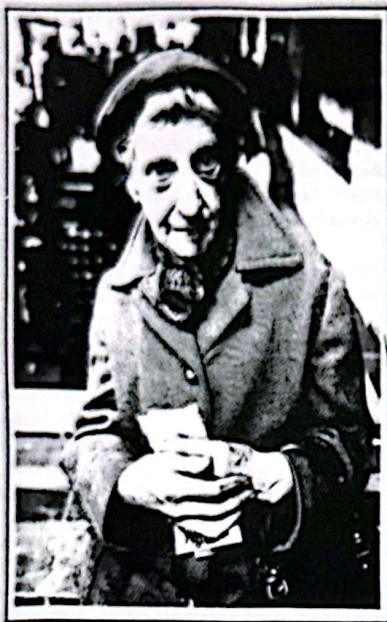
Outside Armagh Prison on International Women's Day 1984

Photos from IRIS: The Republican Magazine



# No Exit

(Translated from *emma* #6, July 1984, a West German feminist monthly.)



Viola Roggenkamp of *emma* clandestinely visited a seniors' residence and resthome in Hamburg, West Germany. The following article stems from her discussions with 78-year-old Clara Tannemann, who lives there.

Each time Clara and I met we were both busy. Me, stuffing letters into the box and she, busy attempting to learn how to walk with crutches. After awhile we started speaking to each other. "If I don't exercise regularly by walking, my leg will only become worse," was the first thing she said to me, "And it mustn't get worse, because it already looks bad, it looks like I can't help myself anymore, don't you think? Just this morning I noticed how the nurse looked suspiciously at me when I crossed the floor. I live around the corner in a resthome, you know. If they decide that I can't make it anymore, they'll put me on the special care station—and from there, you can't get away anymore."

A few days later I went to the resthome office. As I neared the reception area, a big glass door opened automatically. "Who would you like to see?" "Clara Tannemann," I responded. "Is Mrs. Tannemann a relative of yours?" "Yes, she is my aunt," I lied, as only family, religious and social welfare visits are allowed.

The nurse led me up long stairways and down long hallways to her room, knocked, opened the door and said, "Mrs. Tannemann, you have a visitor. Your niece is here." For a second she was astonished as she looked at me from behind her thick glasses with her big blue eyes. Then, catching on, "How nice of you to come see me,"

she said with a shining face. Before she could push herself up out of the big chair, I leaned over and embraced her.

"Visitors are supposed to announce themselves by name and in advance—for security reasons," the nurse politely said to me. Then we were alone. "We have to change our manners toward each other when we're in public," Clara T. said, "we have to appear as if we are quite familiar with each other." I nodded and made it clear that I would only put on a show in front of the others; whenever we were alone I would, of course, call her Mrs. Tannemann, as a sign of respect. She said nothing, but seemed pleased. She immediately told me about Friederike. "She has become my best friend here," she said. "She is only 68, ten years younger than I am. I share the room with her. Right now she's in the city buying a bottle of wine for the two of us. No one here must find out. Tonight it's her turn to read a story, and we're starting a new book—*Gone With the Wind*."

During one of the communal dinners, a nurse stepped up to the podium and spoke through a microphone. "May I ask for your attention please." She waited a few seconds until the conversation at the tables quieted down. Only Martha, who is hard of hearing, was still talking in a very loud voice, "The tea is too thin again." "In the garden," the nurse starts her announcements, "a black alligator purse was found. It can be picked up from the doorman. Tomorrow afternoon an art course will begin here in the common dining room. Also, the management will buy a new TV next week." Light applause and talking between neighbors. "And now one last bit of bad news, our livingmate, Elfriede Zahl, died this morning at the age of 89 in the special care station." "Oh God, Elfie," is Martha's loud response. "She only had a problem with her leg." Everyone else is silent.

Clara, who didn't know Elfriede that well, (there are 130 residents in this resthome) bends forward to me, looks into my startled face and says disapprovingly, "Such news is not frightening to us anymore. Every human has to die and especially in a rest home. It happens here nearly every day. But the management pretends that we all have to make it to 110 years old. Friederike came home to the resthome after midnight last night. She received an official warning. They tried to scare her." "That can be very dangerous for you," she mimed in a mocked official voice, "At your age! Didn't you ever hear about the possibility of being attacked out on the streets? You must be home by 11 o'clock at the latest. After all, we are responsible for your health." She laughs and shakes her head, her thick white curls dancing. "Many of us came here to escape the guardianship of our children," she says, "And now the manage-

ment restricts us. We, who have a life experience of sixty or eighty years.

"This morning there was a big scene at the entrance, the big glass door you came through..." "It opens automatically," I said in response. "You would think so. But we have been suspicious for some time and now we have proof. It only opens automatically from the outside—not from the inside. The doorman decides who is allowed out and who is not. He pushes a button. There are, of course, some who are a little mixed up and hazy, those who they fear might go out and break their leg on the next sidewalk are not allowed out. This is why I am concerned about my leg. Martha, who wanted to go out walked towards the door, but nothing happened. Then, like a dummy, she stomped up and down in front of the door. She thought the door was out of order. The same thing has already happened to some others who just gave in and then go to the garden to sneak out.

"But not Martha. She began shouting in her loud voice. Immediately a nurse showed up and tried to lead her away. As luck would have it, just at this moment Friederike showed up because she was on her way out. The door opened. This did Martha in. She became so upset they gave her an injection to calm her down. Friederike wants to report this incident to the advisory panel. But we don't know if that will have any effect."

Friederike entered the Seniors' Residence and Resthome four years ago. Her husband had just died and her daughter felt obligated to take care of her mom in her home. But Friederike didn't want this, even though she was very lonely. "I still could have managed on my pension, but my house was zoned for redevelopment and torn down." Instead of looking for another apartment, she listened to the concern of her well-meaning neighbors and especially to her son, and started looking for a place in a resthome "just in case."

"Everywhere I called, I was told they were booked up until the year 2000, here they say there is a waiting list of 100. But then, at every place, they added 'Wait, you're in luck, we just happen to have one opening. But you will have to reserve it immediately.'" Which Friederike did, then later she felt, at age 64, she was too young to enter a resthome.

At the Seniors' Residence and Resthome she was assigned her own separate apartment. She could bring her own furniture and even her parakeet. At noontime, she ate lunch in the common dining area with all the other resthome residents who lived in the same big building, she cooked for herself in the morning and at night.

"Every morning someone came and vacuumed." Friederike thought that was a nice service. "I am not orderly at all," she



## West Germany

**"They expect you to grow old gracefully, especially if you are a woman, with hair turning grey and life bordering on the ephemeral."**

said. But the management decided she didn't take good enough care of her apartment and suggested that she move into the actual resthome.

She had been sick a few times and gratefully took advantage of the medical services available to residents. And after that they said, "You can't do this anymore by yourself, move on over to the other part of the resthome where you'll be more comfortable." And Friederike did. Being a very social person and because she already knew and liked Clara, she moved into Clara's room, but was not allowed to take her parakeet even though Clara wouldn't have minded. "When Friederike moved in, my other roommate, Kristen, had just died. Suicide.

"Kristen wanted to die. She asked for her doctor's assistance, but, of course,

those in charge would not go along. She had cancer and asked a friend from the outside to send her some pills. We all knew about it and were on her side. The pills only had to get to her somehow on the special care station."

Clara and Friederike have found that with unity against the management and the nursing staff, they were able to obtain greater freedom for themselves and others. Freedom, which the management and the staff often limit or deny because of over-protective attitudes and because they often underestimate older people in general.

"Of course, the nurses have their orders and some are quite nice. But for most of them it's only a 'job' as one says today. But we are human beings, old, grown up human beings—not boarding school pupils. I often have the feeling here that I have to

prove my sanity through obedience."

There is a knock at the door and Ilona comes in. Ilona is 75—a tall, thin woman with a gaunt face. She looks at me and Clara says, "This is my niece. She's okay. You can talk openly." Ilona turns red. "Can we switch tonight?" she asks. Clara nods, "Friederike will be back in time for dinner." And then to me, "Friederike says she has never been under such time pressure. From 8-9 o'clock—breakfast; 12 o'clock—lunch; 4 o'clock—snacktime, if one wishes; and from 5-6 o'clock—supper. If you want to go to the city, you have to take the bus, which takes 45 minutes. In order to go to a matinee one has to bolt down lunch and miss supper. If one goes after supper, no meals will be missed, but the doors will be locked when you return. It's impossible for us to attend a seminar, stroll around in the city or spend time in the library, because none of us owns a car. [In Germany, you are supposed to voluntarily surrender your driver's license at age 65.] Only when there are elections do we get to go for a ride to the polling place. I always ask for a ride from the conservatives, but in the last election I voted for the Green Party." When Ilona leaves, Clara looks at me and says, "Love is the most awkward thing in a place like this. Ilona met someone here. He is 84 and a gentleman. Only married couples may live together and those who aren't married can't because their pensions would be reduced, and why should they marry in the first place?

"That's why Friederike and I always switch rooms when Ilona and her friend want to be alone. Ilona shares her room with a big mouth. Gossip is the last thing they need—the shame. This way they have a chance to be alone for 4 or 5 hours. Ilona's roommate likes to sit and watch TV. At 11 o'clock the lights go out. Then Friederike and I have to go back to our room—before the program is over. Sometimes I feel like a troublemaker in the resthome.

"The management doesn't like to see any love relationships or intimate friendships. They do everything to make this impossible and go so far as to forbid it. They say it causes petty jealousies. In the past they have even transferred one of the two parties to another resthome. The other argument used is 'At your age?' What prudery toward the generation of their own parents! Often, old people succumb to the pressure of rules and are treated like confined inmates. Middle-aged people dictate the sexuality of the old, just as they do for the young." □

### Further reading:

- Why Survive? Being Old in America, by Robert Butler Harper & Row, 1975.



Erika Sulzer-Kleinmeier/Emma



# THE "SHE-WOLF"



(The following article is excerpted from an interview with Nicky Goddemaer in *Chronique 08*, a bi-monthly published by the *Université des Femmes*, Brussels, Belgium.)

First of all, they try to make you something you're not. I had been sent to live with my mother after my father died. That was 1963. I was turning 16 and a half and I already knew Carole. I didn't run away from my mother's so I could be sexually free; I would have lived with women anyway. I ran away because I couldn't stand it at home. My mom and her boyfriend saw things their own way; I wanted to live with my own vices.

The police came for me after my mother complained. According to her, I had left home "to live with a slut." And it didn't help that she was Black. The police picked me up at the School of Arts and Crafts and took me right to the prosecutor's office. That's where I was interrogated. His first question—obviously of vital importance—was whether I had had sexual relations with a man. I asked him if he knew what he was asking, since my mother had complained that I left with a woman. He said it didn't matter if I didn't answer because I would have to see the gynecologist anyway.

For the gynecologist it was simple; it must be that I was pregnant. "My dear girl, if you ran away, no doubt it was to be with a boy." He didn't want to listen to me and I wouldn't let him examine me. The interrogation was concluded by a sociologist or someone like that. She, too, couldn't accept that I could simply love a woman, make love to a woman. She told me I was incorrigible, rotten to the core.

From all that, I earned my way into a home for delinquents. There I was received by a counselor. She used to call me the "she-wolf" and told me that she hoped I would behave myself—above all by not having contact with the other girls in the home like I'd had with Carole. She thought it would be better for me to sleep alone on

a separate floor in the beginning. As it turned out, there was no such space available. I was put with two other girls on a floor and for the first few days my door was locked from the outside. When they decided I was tamed, they left my door open. That's when I took off.

After that it was always the same story—I was brought back. I had to start all over with the psychiatrist, gynecologist, etc. Like everyone else, I had to attend classes that were a waste of time. I complained to the judge about these classes and he finally agreed with me. I got to take classes somewhere else. Obviously, I took this new opportunity to run away. I went back to Carole and we went all over Italy and France and up to the North Sea. I was a good girl though—I always sent postcards back to the judge.

I was brought back to the home many times and finally I was placed in Saint-Servais' Juvenile Hall which was in Namur, the most severe rehabilitation program for girls. When I got there I had to see the gynecologist and take a shower before even coming in contact with the others—like they wanted to purify me. It was quite humiliating. Then I was subjected to all their regulations, like making contact with my mother. It really drove me crazy that they didn't listen to anything I said. I refused to see my mother whenever she came to visit me.

And then there was the depersonalization: everybody with the same haircut, same uniform, same religion. They didn't give a damn if you were an atheist or a Muslim, everyone had to go to church. They had the nerve to ask your religion and put it down in your file, but then they ignored it. They also opened our mail. You had the right to write to the judge if something was wrong, but if you said too much, your letter would never get there. The only time a letter reached the judge was with the complicity of one of the girls who worked outside. If they found out about it, you ran

"And then there was the depersonalization; everybody with the same haircut, same uniform, same religion"



Mädchen fordern Rechte



the risk of losing four weekend visits and all the amenities: tennis, swimming and cigarettes.

You're under the guardianship of the institution until 21, and then under that of the judge until 25. Often the parents don't know that when they turn to the justice system for help in taking care of their child, they lose all of their control. My own mother regretted it, but she had no way to get me out of the system. It is the judge who even grants you permission to marry.

Inside, you're treated differently depending on who you are and what you do or have done. There are always the ones who become pets, you know, favorites. At Saint-Servais it was really very obvious how they split you up. First, I was put in Building 2 with the Flemish—it was very linguistic. They put me there because I had done my studies in Flemish. Building 10 housed the girls from good families. We weren't allowed any contact with them. After I ran away for the second time, I was put in a special ward—for the hopeless cases. There you have the drug addicts, the lesbians and those from mental institutions.

Unfortunately, it isn't taken into account why these girls were in mental institutions. Two had been raped by their father...it's really outrageous! Besides, in most cases of rape, the girls were locked up as if they were the criminals. Half of the girls there were teenage mothers and the other half delinquents. Anyway, it's the same thing: if they were teenage mothers, they were considered delinquents.

Once you get out, you have to justify the past three or four years of your life when you apply for a job or to a school. You can be sure that if you are at school and you say you were in an institution, you'll have a hard time, very hard. At the slightest incident they'll say they knew it would happen because you are a ward of the state.

I'd like to point out especially that the only ones that came out more or less sane were the lesbians or the ones that discovered their homosexuality during their time in the institution. These lesbians, the ones who had to struggle to survive in an environment full of rules calling lesbianism a disease, are strong enough to live their homosexuality freely when they leave the institution. The others, for the most part, became prostitutes. The pimps are on the look-out for girls who run-away or leave the institutions. Maybe things have changed, but I am talking about my own experiences and those of the girls I knew there. □

#### Further reading:

- Justice for Young Women, by Sue Davidson, *New Directions for Young Women*, 1982.
- Juvenile Justice, a Guide to Practice and Theory, by S.M. Cox, Brown, 1978.
- Juvenile Justice: the legal rights of young people, Nancy Boyarsky, Benziger, Bruce and Glencoe, 1977.
- Juvenile Justice: the progressive legacy and current reforms, by Empey LaMart, Charlottesville University Press, 1979.

# Guardian

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After eight years of military terror, the Argentine government was returned to civilian rule in December 1983. The newly elected president, Raúl Alfonsín of the Radical Civic Union party—a party of the middle class—took office facing grave economic conditions and the military's human rights abuses. Within days of taking office, Alfonsín forced more than half of the army's generals to retire and abolished the powerful positions of commander of the army, navy and airforce. At the same time, a government decree court-martialed the commanders-in-chief who ruled between 1976 and 1982. Their charges included "homicide, illegal privation of liberty and torture of prisoners."

Since then, however, little has been done to bring those responsible for the "dirty war" to trial. This has brought criticism from human rights leaders. Alfonsín supports prosecuting only those who gave orders rather than those who carried them out. He also supports their being tried in military courts, in which the proceedings would be secret and there would be no representation for the victims or their families, rather than in civilian courts where the sentences are sure to be much harsher. The government "compromised" with legislation giving the military courts the right to the first trial, and civilian courts could be used to challenge the ruling. The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo have demonstrated in opposition to military trials, but the government does not want to threaten the military more than they feel is necessary and views the trials as a chance for the military to prove that they want "justice."

Argentina is setting a precedent as the military regimes of Latin America look on to see what they may one day face. Although Alfonsín was known for his criticism of human rights abuses, his power is abridged by the old military elite and his popular support wanes with his weakness.

(The following pieces were translated from *No Habrá Manto de Olvido*, a book published by families of the disappeared, La Plata, Argentina, 1982.)

For more than seven years I have been far from this city, this neighborhood, this house. In spite of the difficulty of living locked up and feeling the hands of those who believe that they have the right to form and deform your life, my life and that of our neighbor, I am a "lucky" woman. I tell you, I'm lucky.

Lucky to be...lucky to be telling my story.

I can recount it at least, there are thousands who can't.

The first thing that people ask me is: "How was it? How did you survive it?" I answer, "It was fine, but it was awful."

You know, I was surprised at my own answer...after so many years I had gone from believing that I'd never see the streets again to believing that liberation day would bring security.

Sometimes I thought I had no fear (I really believed it), but I knew the deep and persistent fear of the unknown. My confidence was—and continues to be—in the making and thinking of a *pueblo*, our nation. It's worth the trouble to continue fighting for.

My fear was that of a person who didn't want to stand there with her arms folded and who feels that even with so much isolation, so much systematic repression and so many "example" cases they will not win.

I was afraid of thinking "if I am fine, why worry about the rest" and "there's nothing to be done, all is lost." My greatest fear was of not being able to comprehend reality, not being able to put myself above what beat us down and continues to beat down everyone. We must face the raw truth to change it, but the fear was, as we said amongst ourselves, that it would make us crazy. That's why the day I found myself outside, I was so happy; I felt happy for having brought the best of each person with whom I had lived and for having left myself with every one of them.

Yes! It went fine...it was awful.

I am more convinced than ever that our fight is just. □

#### Further Reading:

- "A Silent Weapon," in *Connexions*, #1, Summer 1981.
- "Shrouded in Silence" in *Connexions*, #3, Winter 1982.

#### My Journey to La Plata an exile's poem

Each day I can fly a little  
Although each day I fly a little less.  
I barely fly over the roofs  
or the terraces anymore.

I like those black and brown roofs  
the terraces with their flower pots, with old cars,  
empty bottles, cases of wine,  
Rusty half dismantled beds.

I like these things  
because they are the permanent memory  
of my journeys to La Plata.  
That small ordinary piece of my far away  
country  
comes with me;  
the eternal game of the constitution,  
the smell of the machines  
the people's impatience with the damned trains  
the carousel in the plaza, going round and round  
with one or two children  
on the silent wooden horses.

That is how I travel and go round and round  
over Belgruno, Chacarita, Villa Crespo, Devoto  
It is as if my soul divides in two,  
and each part pulls to one side...  
And we go with the four winds.

I don't want bits of my town;  
I want the whole of it.  
I want a *boliche de gallegos*,  
Florence Varela's small houses, the Gerli bridge,  
the old people and the dogs taking a walk on the street,  
the children playing ball, with their legs  
muddled,  
the women fighting with the butchers  
and the men coming home tired from their jobs.

For my people I want "A piece of bread  
they can sit on"

and as Benedetti said:  
"Perhaps my only notion of country  
is this urgency to say US."

Anonymous

Translated by Shana Ritter

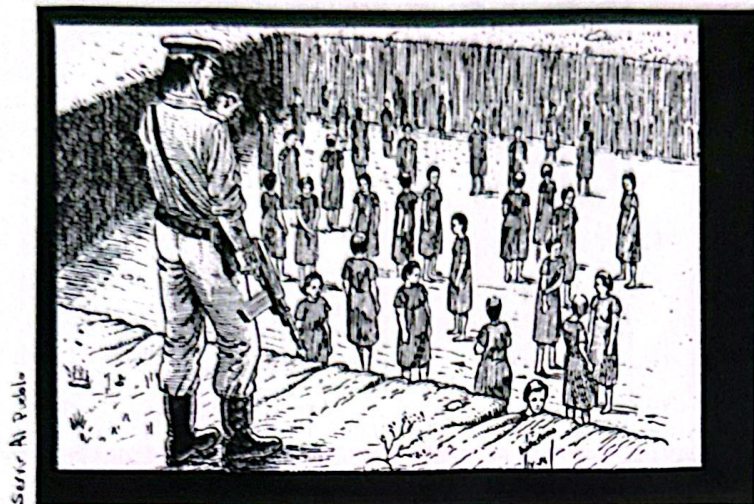


Quehaceres



# What Do You Expect, We Organized!

EL SALVADOR



A delegation of U.S. women visited Central America during the beginning of this year. In El Salvador they met with six political women prisoners in Iolonga Prison. The following interview was held in the prison. Although no tape recorders or cameras were allowed in, notes were kept as best as possible. The women prisoners were interviewed without the constant presence of a guard. One woman acted as spokesperson for the group.

**Q: How many women are there in Iolonga?**

A: There are 155 women in total; of these 58 are political prisoners. There are three blocks, two for criminals and one for political prisoners. We are allowed to mix, but we would rather avoid the confrontations. We are all leftists and the other women are rightists.

The 58 of us range in age from 13 to 80 and we also have 20 children with us. These children had nowhere else to go, so they stayed here with their mothers.

**Q: Is there any provision for the children?**

A: No. We share our food with them. They allow us 30 cents a day per person for food, but there is nothing for the children.

**Q: How long have you been here?**

A: The six of us have been here between eight months and two years. No charges and no lawyers, we are held under 507, the state of emergency which allows for holding people one to two years with no charges. Only three of us have lawyers. It is very dangerous to defend leftists.

**Q: What were you doing before your arrest?**

A: Two of us were students, two worked in refugee camps, two had taken up arms.

**Q: What caused you to take up arms?**

A: We tried peaceful means, but the repres-

sion continues to grow. People get hungrier, and peaceful paths are closed to them. I reached a frightening, an unbearable level of poverty.

**Q: What happens when one is arrested?**

A: The first 15 days are the worst. You're taken and tortured—sometimes in a secret prison. If others know where you are, you get out more easily. Sometimes they take a woman and throw her into the men's prison and leave her there to do what they want. Afterwards if you're still alive, you're brought to another prison.

**Q: What do you think kept you from being killed since so many are?**

A: The government needs a certain number of prisoners for human rights figures, to show that not everyone is killed. It just happened to be us.

**Q: Where are your families now?**

A: Most of our husbands are also in prison. Sometimes our children are with relatives or neighbors, or in a home for prisoners' children. Some are here with us. There is one family here of four generations: grandmother, daughter, granddaughter and great granddaughter.

**Q: What are conditions like?**

A: We're not given much to clean ourselves or to clean with. We do the best we can. Our group initiated a petition for health care which hasn't had a response. Doctors get low salaries and spend a minimum of time here, and also doctors have been shot for treating leftists. Medicines are prescribed but the system doesn't supply them. Sometimes a friend or family on the outside can get it for you, more rarely still, the Red Cross.

**Q: What group organized for the petition?**

A: Our organization of prisoners. There wasn't one when we first came, but we

were arrested for organizing. So what do you expect? We organized. All 58 of us belong.

At first it was more repressive. There was always a male guard at the door, but we got him removed. Also, we would put our slogans up on the wall and they would paint over them—every day the same thing. Now finally as you see, they leave them up on that wall. We organized to get rid of daily examples of repression.

We work on committees. One group orients new prisoners (on the day of the interview an 80 year old woman arrived at the prison who had been taken by helicopter from a zone of conflict). Another provides care if someone is sick, another tutors other prisoners. We all work together.

**Q: What happens after you're released?**

A: If and when you're released, there are employment problems. Innocent or not, newspapers publish your arrest. You have to join an organization or leave the country. You leave prison with the fear of being recognized. You've lost your papers and have to get new ones. And there are the death squads. Our situation is good business for the armed forces.

**Q: How do you see the role of the U.S. in El Salvador?**

A: We think it's clear who defines things in this country—the North American government. They supply the Salvadoran military with arms and bombs. The U.S. wants a military solution to the problem. The elections are just buying time to increase military assistance and improve their image. With Reagan's re-election, we think he'll call for intervention, which really already exists. U.S. intervention maintains the injustice here and the situation is getting worse. Hardly a peasant family hasn't lost a member.

We are impressed with North Americans who try to work and help in sincere ways. Our triumph will come and we'll settle our own affairs. The FMLN [Farabundo Martí National Liberation Army] already defeated the first army; now the second army is being prepared. It too will be defeated. □

## Further readings:

- The Long War: Dictatorship and Revolution in El Salvador, James Dunkerly, Junction Books, 1983.
- "Women and War in El Salvador," from WIRES, 2700 Broadway, Room 7, New York, New York 10025.
- "El Salvador," Connexions, #11, Winter 1984.



# All That Was

Uruguay has been under military rule since 1973, when 120 years of South America's most middle class democracy was interrupted by a coup. Uruguay, with a population of three million, has the highest percentage of political prisoners in South America with 800 still imprisoned. Over the past 11 years thousands of people have been jailed, killed or are missing.

The military has promised to hold elections on November 25, 1984 in order to establish a new government in March 1985. This is problematic for various reasons. The new constitution will still allow the military to maintain a certain amount of power. In addition, like most other Latin American countries, Uruguay has been in a deep recession since 1981 with a high foreign debt. The new government will have to impose austere measures on a populace tired of austerity. And the most important obstacle is a possible boycott of the elections.

There are three legal political parties, two of which, the Blancos and the Colorados, have dominated Uruguayan politics since the turn of the century. Of the two, the Blancos now lean more to the left because of Wilson Ferreira Aldunate, a popular, charismatic leader. The third is the small Civic Union party. The political parties of the opposition have united under the name *Frente Amplio* [Broad Front], however they are banned from the elections. The military has also banned Ferreira, the Blancos' presidential candidate, and recently arrested him upon his return after 11 years of exile. The military fears that if Ferreira is elected, he will bring the officials before a civilian court for their human rights violations. With Ferreira's arrest, the Blancos withdrew from all negotiations with the military and may boycott the elections. The Colorados have continued their negotiations and plan to participate in the elections.

(Translated from *Mujer-ILET*, a monthly feminist news service based in Santiago, Chile, October, 1983.)

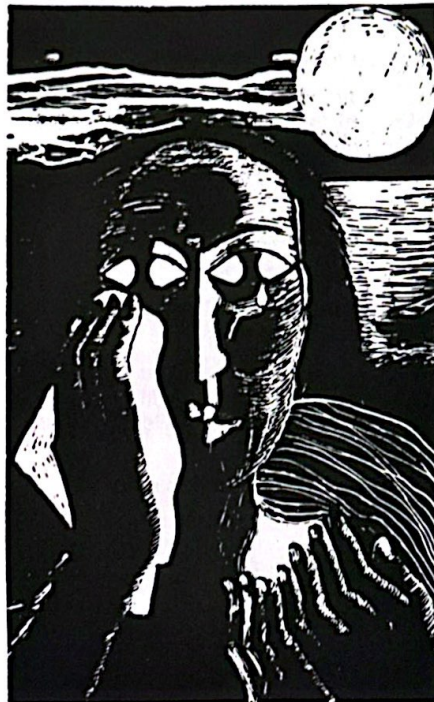
Punta de Rieles was a convent in Uruguay until 1975 when it was converted into a prison to house women political prisoners. It was once a beautiful place, full of windows, but each one has been covered over so not even a ray of light can filter in.

The treatment the prisoners receive is in accordance with the result of a study by doctors and psychologists. The study describes how to implement torture scientifically while avoiding noticeable scars in order to better achieve the physical and psychological destruction of the women prisoners.

In Punta de Rieles, the prisoners, clad in gray uniforms, are identified by numbers. There are women who for eight



and Is...



Yenia Dumnova/Kommentar

or ten years have been addressed only by number, never by name. Their whole life has been transformed. They eat and sleep poorly and live in constant tension.

There is no pattern to their daily life; each day is distinct and they don't know what the next day will bring. One day of complete silence, the next a maddening racket of music played at full volume, another a judicial summons to testify or "inspection" when the guards enter the cells to observe, and in passing, wreck and take things while the prisoners wait around for hours or are confined in the bathroom.

The sanctions are arbitrary, often for a crime not committed. Not only do the prisoners suffer, but so do their families and children, who are prohibited from visiting.

Despite being pregnant, women were still tortured. Forty children have been born in the prison. They lived with their mothers and witnessed their torture, until the moment their mothers were called upon to form a line with their children in their arms and hand them over to their families in the midst of a confusion of sentiments: happiness and heartbreak.

Until recently, the prisoners were forced to do hard labor—even a woman of 65 had to move dirt, stones and gravel, and because of that suffered a heart attack. But through their resistance the prisoners brought an end to forced labor.

A third of the prisoners are ill. They have heart disease, back problems and other illnesses caused by stress and torture. Medical assistance is totally insufficient, irregular and delayed, and medicine is prescribed without any system of order.

But in spite of everything, the prison has its miracle. That miracle is the joy of life which develops in different forms, behind each number on every gray uniform. The camaraderie comprises an element that every recluse cultivates with careful attention. In the moments of the greatest isolation, it is difficult not to listen to a cough, a voice, a laugh.

Further readings:

- Amnesty International Report on Human Rights: Violations in Uruguay, November 1983.

- Mental Health Aspects of Political Imprisonment in Uruguay, *Amnesty International*, June 1983.

**There is no pattern to their daily life, each day is distinct and they don't know what the next day will bring.**





### Testimony of a Woman Political Prisoner from Uruguay

...Now there are times when I wonder what you will think of me, of what I think and feel. Here, often my *compañeras*, who for the most part are daughters whose mothers visit them, say things like: "Who but the mother can understand? Who but the mother can feel what one feels?" I am always quiet when I hear these things. I am quiet and I think: "Will my daughters feel this way? Will they be able to feel, in this distance which we are obliged to live under, that yes, that I am, by being their mother, only for that and precisely for the boundlessness that means, I am with them more than anything. I live with their voice, their image at my side..."

I am with you, and that means that I will always be there to help you. I am with you and that means that I love you, regardless of what happens. I can become serious or even angry one day, but that will never last, because what will endure is my love for you.

I am with you and that means that I want to always understand you. Every little thing that you live. Everything matters to me—school, the loving men and women friends that you have, if you cry one day and laugh the next, what you talk about with your friends and the family. All that, I want to say, and more.

At times I've thought: "What do I give to my daughters?" In reality my little girls, my loves, *I give you simply all that was and is my life*. I give you including the separation under which we live, although I don't want it nor is it something that I chose. I give you all the time of my years dedicated to making real a dream that I pursued and that I still pursue. A dream of children laughing and warm sand, a dream of fathers working and mothers singing, playing and also working. A dream of outings in the sun in a vast countryside...Those years, with the good and the bad, the happiness and the sadness, because those are my years with you. □

Signed by Selva Brasello, no. 270, Sector D, Punta de Rieles Prison.

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# No Court, No Trial, No Jury

(The following information is based on three speeches given by Lea Tzemel, an Israeli lawyer who defends Palestinians, when she was in the United States in 1983.)

A million Palestinians are currently living under Occupation. The "Defense Regulation," a hold-over from the British Mandate, governs the Occupied Territories (the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and until it was formally annexed to Israel, the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem). Palestinians depend totally on the discretion of the military governor for their daily needs, such as obtaining a driver's license, opening an enterprise or a library, or leaving town. People are tried daily in the military courts on various offenses.

The military court, appointed by the military governor, consists of military judges, military prosecution, and then some kind of defense. There are no appeals on the decisions of the court and punishments are very high. The military governor also has administrative power to punish without a trial, by confiscating land and destroying houses, both of which have been occurring more frequently. This collective punishment is part of the "Defense Regulation." It applies also to Palestinians living in Israel.

A lawyer cannot be involved in a case in its major and most important stage, interrogation. In a security case, the security services can sign an order preventing the lawyer any contact with a client during the first 15 days for Jews and 18 days for Palestinians, but this can be extended to a

month or longer. Only after the client has signed a confession, can the lawyer see her/him. The interrogation, which often includes torture, is aimed at extracting a confession which is then used as the main, and often the only, evidence.

Palestinian prisoners are not accorded the rights of Prisoners of War because the Israeli government has never recognized them as such. Under the Fourth Geneva Convention, during wartime, when one country occupies another, the civilians living in that territory are protected. The Occupying Power can take and hold some of the population as internees if they are suspected of being a security risk. But they are then granted by the Convention a whole spectrum of rights: for full civil capacity, for frequent family visits, to see a lawyer, to read books, to receive medical care, not to be held in a war area, etc. All of these things have been denied to both the male and female Palestinian prisoners, [including the women prisoners at Neve Tirzoh, all of whom have been charged with crimes that "threaten the security of the state."]

(The following was written by Women Against the Occupation [WAO], an Israeli feminist group formed in June 1982 as "Women Against the Invasion of Lebanon" in direct response to the Israeli invasion. WAO continues to oppose all forms of occupation perpetrated by Israel and to expose the links between militarism and the subjugation of women. Recently they have been demonstrating with Palestinian women regarding the treatment of women political prisoners in Israel. Also included is an update from *Democratic Palestine*, no. 3, a monthly of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, May 1984.)

Neve Tirzoh prison was built by the British prior to 1948. In 1971 the Israeli authorities decided to convert it to a model prison. Located near Ramleh on the West Bank, it is a kind of women's annex to the huge men's prison there. It houses both prisoners indicted under common law, the majority being Israeli, and those detained under "security" provisions who have long sentences, the vast majority being Palestinian. It is overcrowded; six women often occupy a cell measuring 2 meters by 3 meters.

On November 4, 1983, 100 Palestinian and Jewish women held a sit-in at the International Red Cross office in East Jerusalem. Although thousands of Palestinians are imprisoned by the Israeli authorities, both in Southern Lebanon and in Israel, the sit-in was aimed specifically on the fate of 32 women in the Neve Tirzoh prison. Since then some have been released.

When the women refused to cook meals for their guards, seeing this as a humiliating and degrading demand [they didn't refuse to do other work], their already poor situation rapidly deteriorated. Since May 1983 they have been locked in their cells 23 hours a day. All reading and writing materials have been denied and family visits, which used to be once every two weeks, have now been cut to once every two months. Even this restriction is arbitrary. One mother has not been allowed to see her daughter in four months and was told to come back in another two.

At the sit-in, one of the women's lawyers reported on a new, more horrifying development. On October 31, 1983, the women noticed that the guards were removing books from the library that their families had brought them. The prisoners started shouting and banging on their cell doors, demanding their books be put back. In response, a special unit of the prison authorities was called in and started spraying [what was believed to be] tear gas into the small, crowded cells. The women ran to the windows and broke the glass in order to breathe. The guards then started beating them with clubs and spraying even more gas. They fell to the ground choking, barely able to breathe, unable to help one another.

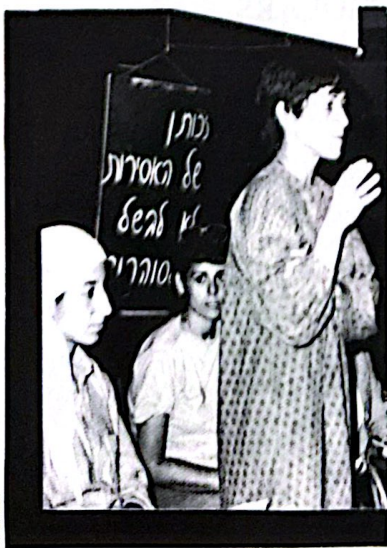
The cells were thick with gas. It clung to the walls and floor, to their clothes, to their bodies. When they washed their clothes to rinse out the gas, they weren't allowed to hang them outside their cells to dry. Guards who entered the cells for a search, threw the wet clothes on the floor, contaminating them once again.

Despite the fact that one doctor and three paramedics were present, the prisoners were denied any treatment for three days. Even then the care was minimal, consisting of Vaseline for their burns and Tylenol for pain.

On March 6, 1984, the women declared a hunger strike in anticipation of International Women's Day. The prison administration tried to get the women to send a delegation in hopes of getting them to end the strike. The women, however, had been boycotting any contact with the authorities since the gassing and thus refused. Instead, they demanded the return of their library. When this demand was fulfilled, the women sent a delegation to talk with the prison governor who agreed that the women would not be forced to do unreasonable kitchen duty or to serve or clean up after the guards and police. At the same time, the prisoners' rights to newspapers, books and radios were recognized and restored.

The victory of the women political prisoners in Neve Tirzoh, who attained all their demands in this round, points to two

Lea Tzemel speaks at a rally in solidarity with political prisoners



R. Moss



elements which are the key to victories in prison strikes generally. First, the organization and determination of the prisoners themselves, and second, broad, active solidarity from outside the prison.

**"If I can't travel to peace-seeking Israelis, they come to me."**

(Women Against the Occupation also sent us this article and interview which illustrate the broad definition of imprisonment as practiced by the Israeli authorities.)

### Town Arrest Under Israeli Occupation

Although many people associate town and house arrest with "banning" as practiced by South Africa, they are unaware that the State of Israel has been using this tactic on hundreds of Palestinians since its inception in 1948.

A holdover from the British Mandate Emergency Regulations, town arrests are a means to limit political activity on a suprallegal level. There is no court, no trial and no jury, hence the person has little recourse.

In the Occupied Territories the military governor of the area decides when a person is a "danger to the security of the state" and confines her/him to their town during the day and to their home from sundown to sunup. Within the Green Line (Israel's pre-1967 borders) the person is called before a judge, but any resemblance to justice stops there. The Shin Bet, Israel's FBI, passes on information to the judge while the person accused is not allowed to hear the charges on the grounds that it would violate security. Not knowing the charges, the person is obviously powerless to defend her/himself.

Town arrests are usually imposed for six months at a time with an ever present option for renewal at the end of the sentence. So far the maximum amount served has been seven years. It is often given to political prisoners upon completion of their prison term to inhibit any political activity. Since the whole concept of town arrest transcends the law, the fact that there is an Israeli law which forbids punishing a person more than once for the same crime is irrelevant.

Needless to say, daily life under town arrest is virtually unbearable. The person must report to the local police station between one to three times a day. In addition, the police often barge into the person's house in the middle of the night to check up on them. The detainee is thus under constant surveillance. Work or study

often becomes impossible especially if the person comes from a small village with limited resources. In January 1984 there were over 70 people under town arrest.

Amal Labadi is a 26 year old Palestinian woman who was under town arrest in her village on the West Bank until January 1984. She was freed with no explanation given by the military authorities. At the time of this interview, she had not yet been freed.

"In my case, town arrest prevents me from conducting my activities. I've been active all my life. Now I'm a member of the higher committee of the Women's Work Committee of the West Bank and Gaza. This committee works to build a Palestinian women's movement in the Occupied Territories and urges women to take part in all levels of society—socially, politically and economically.

"I must have daily contact with women in the refugee camps, cities and villages in order to persuade them to go out of their houses, to raise their consciousness. So, because of town arrest, I can't talk with women on simple social issues such as how to take care of their children and their own health. By my teaching women first aid, to read and write, I'm jeopardizing Israel's security.

"Besides these activities, I'm treasurer of the Union of Public Institution Workers which organizes workers from three villages, including mine. I must travel between these villages for my union work, meeting with workers, etc.

"On the personal level, I'm now seven months pregnant. My doctor is in Jerusalem and I need to see him every week, but I must ask permission to travel there from the military commander. This situation threatens my life and the life of my child. I was sick with a cold last week but was refused permission to see my doctor. I'm among the few who have a phone in the village so at least I could phone him. When the time comes for me to deliver my child, I must ask for permission from the army to go to the hospital. I won't have my



Jewish and Arab women are twins the land has born

baby at home with no doctor or nurse in the village. I'll go to the hospital, and if they want to arrest me and my baby afterward, let them!

"Besides this, my husband is imprisoned in Gaza. I asked permission to visit him but this was turned down yesterday. He has ten more months to serve, and I probably won't be able to see him. I used to visit my mother in Ramleh five times a week since she is 65 years old and ill. I'm the only one who can visit her regularly, and her doctor said she is unable to take care of herself, but my request to be permitted to visit her was not even answered. Of course, my social life has also been disrupted. I can't visit friends or family or be present at family occasions.

"One of the reasons I believe I'm under town arrest was because of my relations with Women Against Occupation. Apparently when both peoples meet to discuss common issues this endangers security. But this will not stop us. If I can't travel to peace-seeking Israelis, they come to me." □

### Further Readings:

- Prisoners of War: Palestinians Under Israeli Occupation, a fuller version of *Lea Tzemer's* speeches, can be obtained through Jewish Women for a Secular Middle East, P.O. Box 8831-62, San Francisco, CA 94188.
- My Home, My Prison, by *Raymonda Hawa Tawil*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1979.
- Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries, by *Rosemary Sayegh*, Zed Press, 1979.
- "Fences, Laws and Border Patrols," *Connexions* #2, Fall 1981.
- "Women Against the Occupation," *Connexions* #11, Winter 1984.
- "Rebel with a Cause," *Connexions* #9 Fall 1983.

### Contact:

- Women Against the Occupation, Box 2760, Tel Aviv, Israel.



# Regarding Madness



Helena, 18 years old, single, admitted 10/5/28. "She came in excited, talkative. Well-oriented in space and time; perfect association of ideas. Good memory. Initiative and affection maintained."



Joana, Italian, 56 years old, married, admitted 12/29/25. "Good mental state. When she was questioned, she fully satisfied all the questions that were asked of her. Oriented in time and space." This is all that her record shows, outside of a medical exam that was also normal. There is no record of her exit.



Antonia, 22 years old, brown, single, admitted 6/22/18. "She was always a little weak in her constitution, as is the rule with the mestizos. Incapable of managing her affairs. One time she bought a masculine attire and left to go travelling. She was recognized as a woman and taken in by the police. Diagnosis: we think, by the above, that we are dealing with a weak-spirited degenerate in whom dementia is little by little taking hold."



Mulherio

(Excerpted from *Mulherio*, Brazilian feminist bi-monthly, May/June 1984.)

The first school of psychiatry in Brazil reflected what was the contemporary European philosophy regarding madness. Besides an organic origin, mental illness was given a social origin as well. It was thought that the mood and the pollution of the industrialized cities provoked the physical and mental degeneration of the work force.

This philosophy was the training ground for the founding of the Juqueri Asylum in 1885 when Brazil itself was undergoing a social upheaval. In 1889, as the last of the Portuguese royal family fled, Brazilian independence was declared. With the abolition of slavery and growing urbanization, the major cities of Brazil were flooded with displaced agricultural workers. This new science of psychology tried to

control and sanitize the cities, which seemed frightening with their dark corners and growing multitudes.

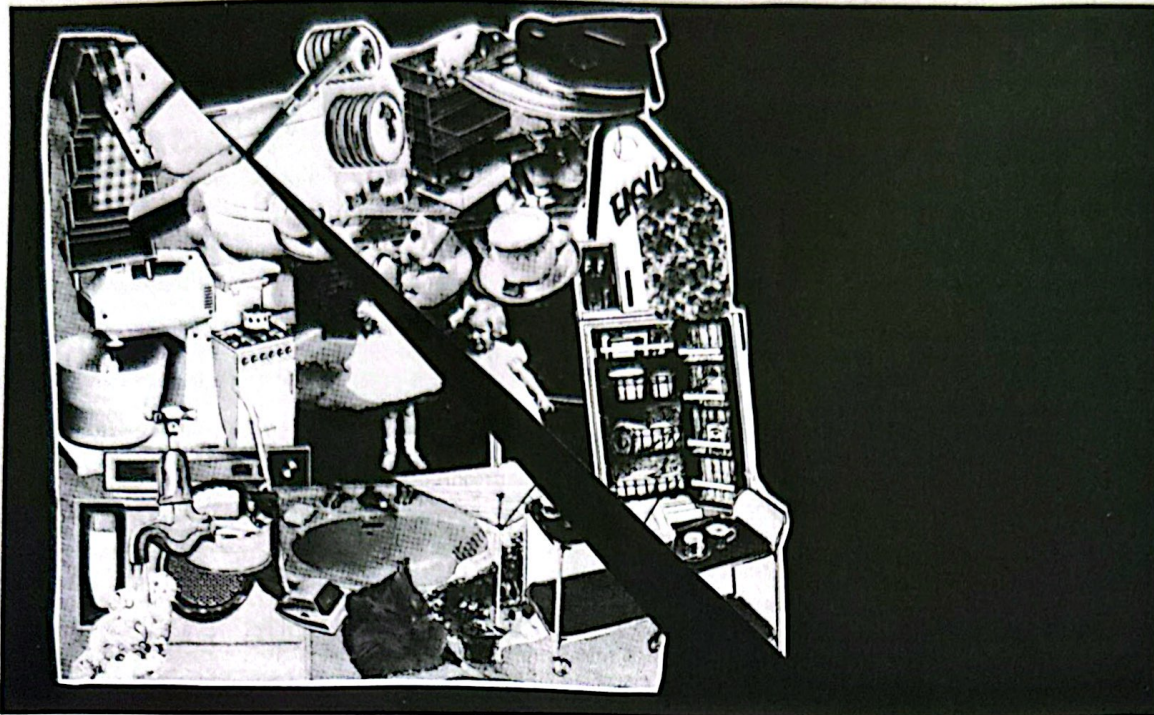
Some of the "socially displaced" were sent to the Juqueri Asylum. Immigrants and Blacks made up the majority of the female population in the asylum. Juqueri consisted of a central building where patients entered, were diagnosed and submitted to chemical, shock and water therapy. The "curable" stayed and were cured or died. If diagnosed as incurable, the men were sent to agricultural colonies while the women stayed in women's pavilions embroidering, sewing and possibly working in the kitchen.

The women pictured here were patients at the Juqueri Asylum. Their case histories are scant, but they symbolize women of their era who were seen by the psychiatric specialists as lacking "reason."



# Watch Every Word

England



(From *Outwrite* #19, an English feminist newspaper, November 1983.)

Campaigning for changes in mental health legislation and the setting up of refuges, support centres and crisis centres for women in emotional distress are some of the aims of a recently initiated National Women and Mental Health Campaign. The group believes it is essential that emotional crises are viewed as a turning-point, a period of questioning and decision. Refuges run by and for women will provide safety and support for those taking control over their own lives without the imposition of white, patriarchal definitions of normality.

They argue that emotional distress must be viewed within its social context. Women in distress live in a society which demands that they be constant nurturers of others' needs and insists on their emotional and financial dependency. "Breaking down" may be viewed as resistance and an attempt to escape from an intolerable life situation.

Two recent conferences held by this London-based group drew large numbers of women with experience in the mental health system, both as professionals and patients. Women have consequently set up specialist groups to work on legislation, fund-raising, a crisis centre, refuges, self-help support, the writing of a book and the (ab)use of medication. Groups are now based in several locations in London and in other parts of the country.

(Excerpted from a personal account by Barbara Wood from *SHE*, an English publication, November 1983.)

I spent last Christmas and New Year in a psychiatric ward of a big hospital. How I got into the state of needing to be admitted I have not thought through yet, but the preceding months had been stressful, physically and mentally. I knew I needed a rest so I agreed to go in.

I had to be at the hospital at 11 o'clock the day before Christmas Eve. The whole family took me—Jack, my husband, and Susan and Jane, my teenagers. There was a kerfuffle registering.

Just before midday Jack left for an appointment and around 2 p.m. Jane decided to go home and do the Christmas chores. I really hated seeing her go and I knew Susan wouldn't let me leave. I was still quite cheerful but getting fed-up. Suddenly, I was called to see a doctor—a dark, short, quietly spoken man who kept apologising for the delay. I don't remember a lot about the interview, apart from questions like, "Are you good?" and "Are you special?" I remember thinking they were trick questions and what on earth was I supposed to say? It's now a painful blur—my introduction to a new world, a world where you had better watch every word and be careful to say what *they* want—and then suddenly, I was admitted.

Susan came to the ward with me and helped me unpack. She was very sweet and motherly. I slipped into a childlike state, apologising about everything. She left at 3:30, brisk and cheerful. I felt abandoned and didn't know what to do. After that, things just happened over which I had no control. I argued strongly against having a blood test, I'd had several recently, but an unfriendly doctor (who turned out to be assigned to my "case") insisted. I had to answer a long questionnaire for a student nurse. She spoke to me like some people talk to very old women who are presumed to have no intelligence and for a while I became this pathetic old lady.

A wonderful woman patient, Marie, adopted me. "Never mind, dear," she'd say, "we're all mad in here. I'm mad, you're mad, so what does it matter? The Queen has her psychiatrist, but she can see hers privately."

Jack and the girls came to see me that evening, and I think I was pretty high. What with my little old lady role, I must have seemed odder than ever. I still haven't the nerve to ask them about myself back then.



I don't remember much more about that night. I couldn't write properly—my hand didn't function well because they had me on a major tranquilliser for a few days which had caused my muscles to stiffen. But I remember feeling the need to communicate with the outside world, and I wrote to a friend in tiny, tiny writing and said she was my lifeline.

Except for a few days like Christmas, I don't remember much chronologically. Much later, I learnt that holidays were the best time to be there because many nasty regulations were relaxed. The worst of these was that on ordinary weekdays you were locked out of your room between 10 a.m. and 12 noon and between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. This made life hell because you could not go anywhere except the "day room" with the T.V. blaring. Neither could we have visitors before 4 p.m., whereas on Christmas Day people were dropping in at all times. Actually, I think we managed to break this rule pretty well because Jane often popped in on the mornings. But it was an added fear to live with.

I decided on my own treatment on Christmas Eve. I asked to be taken off the tranquillisers and my doctor refused. He was grim, bleary-eyed and utterly uncommunicative. Obediently, I turned up for the rotten things that evening. "You have been crossed off," I was told. For four days I was wonderfully pill free.

Twenty four hours are a long time. In normal life you don't usually notice because you're rushing around being busy or relaxing or sleeping. But in there, with a sleep problem, 24 hours are endless and the next 24 will be just the same. Time becomes meaningless and yet the whole place is completely hung up on the time structure. My watch was broken so I just played games with it—I wound it up any time and occasionally looked to see how many minutes had passed. People always had to yell at me to go for pills and meals; I never understood the rush and the way they took it so seriously.

The nights were strange, sometimes frightening. Sleeping pills (which were useless anyway) were given out at 9:30 p.m. There were a lot of hours to go before early morning tea at 7 a.m. When I couldn't sleep I'd get up and wander into the day room. Some of the best conversations went on then—few people were around and those of us who were seemed to be more relaxed and talkative. I spent one whole night planning to leave the place, talking to Mike from Scotland. "Of course you can," he said. "You're not sectioned like most of us. You're voluntary." What a lot I'd yet to learn.

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**"But I remember feeling the need to communicate with the outside world, and I wrote to a friend in tiny, tiny writing and said that she was my lifeline."**

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On the 27th I rang home and told Jack I was coming out. "Oh, I don't think you can do that darling," he said. "Yes, I can—I'm voluntary." A lot I knew. Actually I thought I *did* know because I'd talked to people by then and in particular had heard Emma's story. She had twice tried to take her own life, once two years ago and once, presumably, recently. She had been sectioned by her social worker with her next-of-kin's agreement; she was at their mercy and they could now sign her in there for a year. Of course Jack, as my next-of-kin, would have to agree, and I knew he wouldn't. I was going to get out and fight for Emma.

Jack and Jane took a long time to arrive. When I was told they were there, I looked everywhere for them. "They are with the doctor," I was eventually told. I wondered what was going on, but was not too worried, just a bit cross. Eventually I was called. After asking how I was, the doctor said, "We think you need treatment." He had cancelled the tranquillisers to see how I would be and I had been cheerful, too cheerful for them no doubt, and I had wept...I thought back. Suddenly Jack and Jane and a Sister were there, and the doctor was talking about signing the form to section me "for 72 hours to start with." I became extremely agitated. Jack sat there, coldly, icily, ignoring my appeal. Jane looked

worried, but fairly friendly. The doctor persisted. I got fed up and went to the door. The Sister blocked my way and wouldn't let me pass. I turned around. "All right, for the sake of the children I bore, I will take pills. But not for him." The doctor muttered that he was going to sign the form. Had Jack given permission beforehand, or didn't he have to? I've never dared ask him. I don't want to know that he agreed to my being kept inside by law.

Jane and I were taken to the lock-up. They immediately brought me pills which I took. Only I could do the swallowing, but I knew that if I wouldn't they had other means. Then greater horrors set in. They could give me ECT (electro convulsive therapy or "electro shock"). Fear. Why hadn't I made conditions? Oh God. Time passed and they put me in a little room with no bed and no door handle. Eventually I broke down and howled and howled. The sound of the key being turned in the lock kept jarring and frightening me. I was locked up. Me, locked up. At some point Jane had to go, promising to be back soon. (What does it feel like to leave your Mum locked up?)

Next morning around 11 someone rather crossly asked if I would stay if they put me back in the ward—was I still going to try to leave? I pointed out that I had not *tried* to leave; I had asked my husband and daughter to fetch me. I then agreed to stay.

Everything was different from then on. I was no longer often cheerful. I was tranquillised and terrified. They could section me for 28 days next—then a year. The mind cannot grasp it, but emotions do.

The girls came. I wouldn't see Jack. I swallowed the idiot tranquillisers that stiffen the muscles and do not ease unhappiness and fear. I felt dreadful. I still do not understand a law which gives a doctor with a social worker or next-of-kin this power. It is terrifying. Why didn't the doctor explain to me what was the matter with me and why I needed treatment? I am in no doubt that I was mentally unwell for reasons I shall explore in time. But nobody told me anything or tried intelligently to persuade me to take pills, and explain why I needed them and what they would do. I was told: "You need treatment." If I had walked out then the police would have arrested me and brought me back—in handcuffs.

As for "treatment"—all this consisted of was pills. I had no therapy, no counselling and there was practically nobody on the staff I trusted. The only thing on offer was art therapy.

To get out of the place you had to be frilled by all the sundry—the "ward round." There was the head psychiatrist of the place, "your" doctor, other doctors and social workers you hadn't met. After, amazingly, only two weeks (it did seem so much longer) I was summoned and they discussed me and asked me questions. I was very careful about what I said. Eventually they decided as I had a "supportive" home to go back to, and as they were short of beds, I could leave, that I should really be in for another week, but...

The family came to collect me, and I walked through those swinging doors and went down the lift and out. It felt more than strange.

Home had never looked so beautiful. In spite of the experts, I was not wholly better, but they had been right about the supportive family. With their love and patience I *did* get well—in time. The experiences in the hospital, and especially being sectioned, have left scars which have not completely healed. But perhaps I'll understand it all one day. Susan has solemnly promised me that they will never let me go there again. There must be constructive help somewhere. But I now know the danger signals and can seek help sooner in the future. One day I will investigate the Mental Health Act. The way they implement it is in many cases completely counter-productive to any benefit you could gain by being there. Voluntarily I would have cooperated, but as it was, I fought them. □

#### Contact:

- National Women and Mental Health Campaign, Box 21, Sisterwrite Bookshop, 190 Upper Street, London N1, England.
- Madness Network News Reader, et al., published by Glide Publications. San Francisco, California, 1974.



# Where is the Justice?

(The following is taken from a letter to *Connexions* from Tracy Kallenberg, July 1984.)

I ended up in here after I was arrested for murder in 1981. I was sentenced to life imprisonment with review for parole after five years. I think it stinks and here are the reasons why. I was given medication before going to court and went to my trial in a dazed, confused state. My lawyer had words with the police on my case and decided he no longer wanted to defend me. I signed a paper which later turned out to be a guilty plea to murder. At the time I did not know and would not have understood anyway. I had intended to plead not guilty. There was another person charged with me and she was convicted of manslaughter; my plea had left it open for her to get a lesser conviction.

Getting a lawyer to fight for you against the police and the courts is pretty hard. Seventeen lawyers and legal aid turned me away, but now I've found someone to help me. My lawyer is working to get either a re-trial or an early parole. We have medical evidence to support my not-guilty plea. We will also argue that the crime was either murder or manslaughter; it is not possible for it to be both, as the different sentences show.

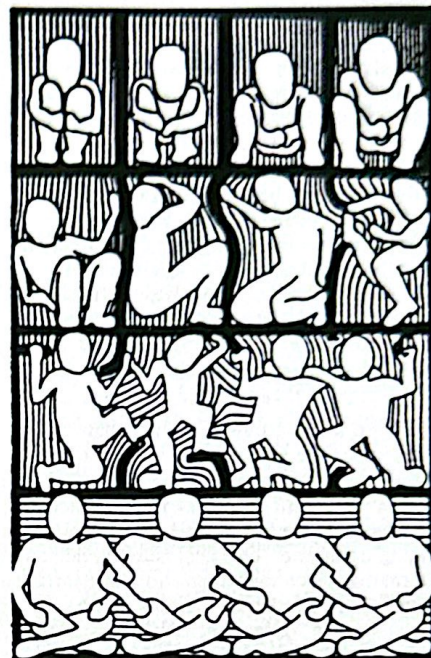
I think that before my arrest I hated the society I was a part of. I was very bitter at the courts because over the last 10 years I had constantly been given sentences, often wrongly, apparently because they didn't like the company I kept or the places I went to. And I questioned their authority, which has never been of help to me. But I have the right to ask why. I was bitter at society, and men weren't my favorite likes either. So that is what led me here.

The justice system in Australia is not any good; it stinks and so does every one who makes up the rules. I've seen so many different things in here; one person kills someone and gets off on probation, another one gets off all together. Some get 18 months or five or ten years. One lady got off with 18 months after telling the courts she loaded a gun, went next door and fired it at the person. Where is the justice? For what I did, I should have been out by now, and I feel so angry when I see people get off light for doing murder. So I would say that the justice system stinks.

The women in here are mainly doing short sentences and those that are doing a few years don't really stick together to get things done in jail. If someone has a complaint, it usually goes like this: everyone feels sorry for you, but no one is willing to help or give their support; so, if you have a complaint about your treatment in jail or other things, you can write to the superintendent of the prison. If you don't get anywhere with him, you write to the director, minister or ombudsman. Sometimes you get treated fairly by at least one of those people. Otherwise there is nothing else to do.

Two years ago I was involved in an assault on prison officers, along with three other prisoners. They took us to court and we were given sentences for the assault. However, the police were not satisfied and so they charged us with attempting to escape. We were locked up in a section of the jail for three months where we were only allowed one hour of exercise a day. After we came out of the punishment side, we were watched all the time by the officers, and if we asked to do anything we were usually refused. I have been considered "maximum security" for the past three years and although I've applied for the rating to be lowered, they say they have to see improvement over a longer period of time because of the assault. We are still being punished for the crime. But the officers involved, who work with us everyday, don't remind us of what happened; to them it's over and done with.

Also being a lesbian in this place is very hard. Until about 5 months ago, me and my lady, Maureen, were treated as if we were sexually sick. We had officers putting us down all the time and telling us what we were doing was wrong. We were hassled if we were sitting on the bed together or, if we were lying on the bed together, they would charge us with misconduct or threaten to. Two heterosexual women could do the same thing and it would be allowed. But after much hassling and talks with the staff and the Super, we have been getting treated much differently. We are now recognised as being together. We get a lot of pettiness from other women though. There are only four lesbians in here at the moment and we have no problems at all. But other women try to get friendly with you to hassle your relationship. Usually this happens when someone is trying to experiment with lesbianism. They give a bad name to the rest of us in here.



CRACUM

We are able to walk around with our arms around each other without any complaints, everyone does it really. And we can openly cuddle, but kissing is going too far. We have privacy in our rooms and are able to go into our own little world without any troubles. But there is a rule that while two people are in a room, the light must be kept on. We are left alone at night though and usually have no hassles any more about things.

When it gets really bad in here we have each other. The support of another lesbian is greater than that of a non-lesbian. We feel for each other because we are the same and we have to stand up for one another because if we don't, we won't get heard. We have to make people understand we are worth listening to. □

In a previous letter to *Connexions*, Tracy expressed her desire to correspond with other lesbians. If you would like to write her:

**N.T. Kallenberg**  
Bandyup Women's Prison  
P.O. Box 100  
Guildford 6055, West Australia



# "The Furious Witch"

In the Netherlands there are about 40 asylums and around 60 RIAGGs (Regional Institutions for Ambulant Mental Health Care). A strong patient movement exists in which women, especially in the past few years, hold a decisive place.

In December 1983, during the last congress of the patient movement "Psychiatry in Reality," the issues of women's mental health care and their position in hospitals were a focus for discussions. One of the results of the congress was the formation of the *Landelijk Netwerk Vrouwen en de Psychiatrie*, a national network of all Dutch organizations that are involved with feminist mental health care and the anti-psychiatry movement.

(The following letter was received by *Connexions* from Jacqueline of *de Helse Hex* in July 1984.)

We are a group of women named *de Helse Hex* (The Furious Witch). We are trying to set up a runaway house both for women who want to run away from mental hospitals and for women who are afraid of ending up in one. Our goal is to provide an alternative place to live and to maintain an information, support and action centre.

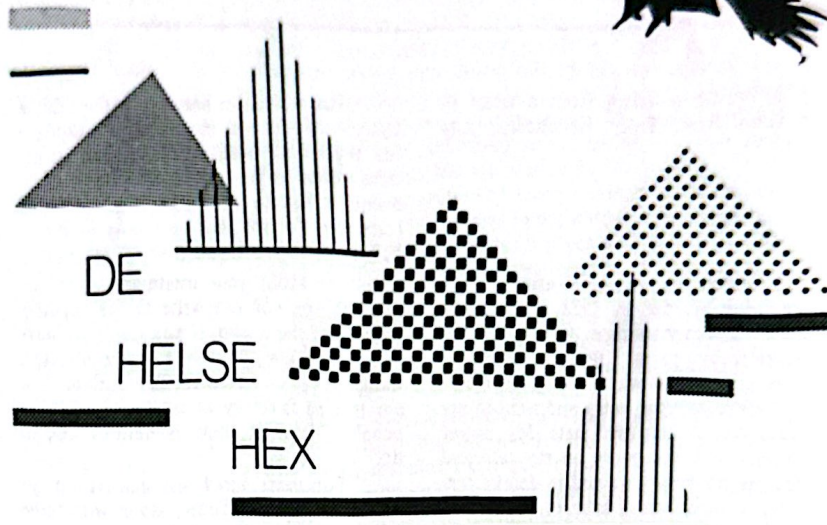
We are against mental hospitals and all the institutions where women presently go for help as long as those institutions and the people who work inside them treat women as second-class people.

We do not agree with the common thought that the best counselors are the ones with an education in psychology. Some of us have done these studies and we think it is better to forget most of what we've learned. Instead, we've developed our own thoughts and ideas about women, mental illness, our society, and the help that is needed. Therefore, we won't allow any "professional" counselors in our group because women deserve more than a professional counselor.

The problems women have are not as individual as they seem. Too many women have the same problems. Women are not the problem, but the society and the way it treats women is the problem.

We, *de Helse Hex*, try to do something about the pain and the problems women have, inside and outside mental hospitals and welfare institutions: first by being a house where women can be together to help each other and learn to fight, and second by planning all kinds of actions concerning women and "mental health."

Our group started about two years ago. Up until we began, runaway houses were for women and men together. Two women, who at that time worked in a "mixed" runaway house, came up with the idea for a woman-only runaway house.



Louise Rathou/De Helse Hex

The three of us realized that mixed runaway houses were not safe places for women. The house the two women worked in was set up four years ago with the idea of giving people an opportunity to run away from mental hospitals. They all thought that people who had suffered a bad time in a mental hospital would understand one another and feel solidarity. But in the mixed runaway house the same thing happened as you see all over the world—men oppressing women. In such a house we thought it impossible for women to take back their own lives.

When we told other women of our idea for a woman-only runaway house, they were very enthusiastic and wanted to join us. In a few months we had a group of 24 women—students, ex-patients, unemployed women. Very soon we noticed how difficult it was to realize our plans. We had no money, no house, and 24 different thoughts about everything. But, we had ourselves and our enthusiasm, and we worked very hard.

We needed money badly. We went to the city council, to the government in the Hague. We organized a big party to earn money. We wrote to all kinds of funds to beg for money. And every time there was a meeting or convention concerning psychiatry, we were there—telling everybody that even in mental hospitals, women are treated second-class.

While working on a plan to realize our runaway house, we often met as a group. Some of the women became impatient and left, others joined the group. We found a house and squatted it. We had to work hard to make something out of it, building walls, wiring the electricity, hook-

ing up the water and gas, etc.

While we were working on the house, the government came up with some money for *de Helse Hex*. We were then able to open our walk-in house to the public.

For many women in the group, working at *de Helse Hex* became too much—and they left. At that time about 12 women stayed. But it became more difficult and more women left. Now, there are only four women. We've since gained two more women and hope at the end of the year [1984] we'll have around 20 women.

At this moment, everything (except plans for the sleeping-house) is going fine. Again, the Dutch government gave us money and our plan is written down in a big proposal.

In Sisterhood,  
Jacqueline namens de Helse Hex

## Further Readings:

- Gek'oot, Dutch magazine of the Patients' Movement in The Netherlands, Postbus 43097, 1009 ZB Amsterdam.
- "An American in Amsterdam," by Swan, Madness Network News, vol. 7, no. 4, Fall 1984.

## Contact:

- Stichting Pandora, 2e Constantijn Huygensstraat 77, 1054 CS Amsterdam.
- *de Helse Hex*, Minagassastr. 1, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

## IF YOU'VE MOVED:

Please be sure to send us a change-of-address card. The Post Office will not forward third-class mail.



# Letters

Dear Friends,

There are 14 Puerto Rican political prisoners currently imprisoned in U.S. jails. They are alleged members of the FALN (National Liberation Armed Forces) which fights against continued U.S. military, political and economic colonization of Puerto Rico. They are not recognized by the U.S. government as political prisoners and POWs although the U.N. recognizes them as such. Consequently, they do not receive the treatment due them under the Geneva Convention. They are subjected to arbitrary transfers, imprisonment far from family and friends, beatings, and denial of visits, mail and medical treatment, among other abuses.

Alejandrina Torres is imprisoned at the Chicago Metropolitan Correctional Center. On July 10th, after a visit with her daughter, Torres was subjected to a brutal strip search by five guards. Afterwards, she was thrown into segregation and denied emergency treatment.

Two other women Puerto Rican political prisoners, Lucy Rodriguez and Haydee Torres, are being held under inhumane conditions at Davis Hall, Alderson, West Virginia. They have been sentenced for life and are held in complete isolation, locked in soundproof, windowless cells. They are forbidden communication with each other or anyone else and are handcuffed wherever they go. Guards check on them every 15 minutes. Haydee, in particular, has a long history of illness, but the prison refuses to give her the treatment she needs or to allow an outside doctor to treat her.

Send letters of protest to: O.C. Jenkins, MCC, 71 W. Van Buren, Chicago, Illinois 60605. Send letters of support to: Alejandrina Torres, #92152-024, MCC, 71 W. Van Buren, Chicago, Ill. 60605 For more information: New Movement in Solidarity with Puerto Rican Independence and Socialism, 3543 18th St., #17, San Francisco, CA, 94110.

Dear Sisters,

Cidhal, the Women's Center in Morelos, Mexico has been subjected to harassment and interruption of their activities by the police and the government. Cidhal publishes a quarterly bulletin entitled *Cidhal Noticias*. They have been accused of operating outside of the boundaries of the law because their center was not registered and because they advocate "subversive" ideas such as the legalization of abortion and greater democratization in Mexico. Letters of support should be sent to *Cidhal Noticias*, Apdo. 579, Cuernavaca 62000, Morelos, Mexico. A one year subscription costs US\$4.00.

Dear Connexions,

I was awaiting the issue of *Connexions* on Women and Prostitution which you had announced in your letter requesting information from us regarding prostitution in Lima. I am writing to say that I am disappointed, concerned and angry.

There is no doubt that Prostitution is a very complex issue. You have done well in wanting to distinguish between the woman—the prostitute—and the institution—prostitution. But the institution is what creates the market, the objects—women's bodies—and the workers. The distinction between prostitutes and prostitution does not eliminate patriarchal oppression.

Prostitution is not just (sic!) about sex. You are right. It is about MALE VIOLENCE and MALE POWER. It is the use of a woman's body as a commodity. Prostitution is the logical form of survival in a patriarchal society in which women are considered as private and public property and are reduced to sex objects. The rentability of prostitution as a means of securing a living does not in any way justify its "professionalization." We do not justify wife abuse by the fact that women have to "choose" to live with brutal and violent men because these men support them. It is understandable why these women made these "choices," but we still have to go beyond the "necessities" of patriarchy.

The feminist analysis of prostitution is absent from your editorial and articles. Your omission of a feminist analysis of prostitution is evident also in your failure to even mention *Female Sexual Slavery* by Kathleen Barry. Nor was there any reference to the International Feminist Network Against Female Sexual Slavery or the Rotterdam Workshop Against Traffic in Women. Even in your article on Thailand, there was no mention of all the organizing by Feminist groups all over the world about the issue of Sexual Tourism. These are serious omissions for a Feminist quarterly. Also lacking was the absence of CONNECTIONS between prostitution, violence against women, incest, rape, pornography: and connections between prostitution and racism, imperialism and militarism.

The very same rationale for considering prostitution as acceptable "work" could be used in accepting work as models for pornographic media. Both can be lucrative, but we know too what has happened to some models of hard core porn. In either case, we can not separate work from the industry. Another thought: pornography is not (just) about sex, either.

## NETWORKING

If you have any addresses or contacts abroad especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America of feminist organizations and lesbian/gay groups, please send them to us. Our upcoming issues will be:

Women and New Technology  
Media  
Health  
U.N. Conference in Nairobi Report

Any information pertaining to any of these issues is greatly appreciated.

And I am angry, because in the article on prostitution in Lima you give a false impression of authorship, referring to our letter from Movimiento el Pozo. You utilized information from our letter but you made no reference to the *real content* of our letter and our position regarding the situation mentioned in the article. I do not consider this to be an ethical or feminist mode of doing journalism.

Yesterday, in Lima, a young woman was found dead, strangled to death in a hotel. She is a prostitute from one of the nearby bars or discos in the center of down-town Lima. Prostitution is not about sex. It is not just work, either. It is often times killing, rape, violence. Not to recognize this is to betray all of us.

Rose Dominic Trapasso

[editors' response: It is unfortunate that the introduction to this issue was misunderstood by Sister Dominic. The hazards of prostitution for women were brought out in our introduction as well as by prostitutes' voices in the articles presented. On the whole these articles offer a view of prostitutes who are, for better or worse, a part of this institution and are organizing for their rights and their very lives. We reported on the situation of prostitutes themselves, in hopes that such knowledge is a first step towards action. From the beginning of our work on the issue and all issues of *Connexions*, we reject the image of women as victims and present the viewpoints of women who are working for change.

We specifically choose to focus on the prostitutes themselves, showing them as workers, as organizers, as thinking and feeling human beings. The violence they experience, the victimization they receive is not obscured in the articles.

*Connexions* has presented information on prostitution tourism, and women organizing against it in issue #1. Also "Women and Militarism" #12 has an in-depth look at the connections between militarism and prostitution in Okinawa.

Your letter pointed out several omissions on our part. We would like you to note that an announcement of the International Network Against Traffic in Women appeared on page 29 of "Women and Prostitution" and an announcement of the publication on the Rotterdam meeting report was included in the following issue.

The information received from your organization helped us to piece together a more complete view of the successful organizing campaigns by Peruvian prostitutes. We are clear at the beginning of the article that it was translated and compiled from three sources, including Movimiento el Pozo. We did not state that Movimiento el Pozo had authored the article.]

Please send us your thoughts on the content of our articles. We would like to have an ongoing letter column as a forum for discussion on the issues raised, and as an arena for networking. We look forward to hearing from you.



# Resources

**Agence femmes information** (French), monthly news service, 21 rue de Jeuneurs, 75002 Paris, France

**Agora** (Japanese), twice-yearly Japanese feminist journal, c/o BOC Publishing, 1-9-6 Shinjuku, Shinjuku, Tokyo 160, Japan

**Asian Women's Liberation**, Japanese feminist publication, available in Japanese and English, Shibuya Coop, Rm. 211, 14-10 Sakurataoka, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150, Japan

**Brujas** (Spanish), monthly feminist magazine, Apdo. Aéreo, 49105 Medellín, Colombia

**La Cacerola** (Spanish), c/o GRECMU, Juan Paulier 1174, Montevideo, Uruguay

**Cahiers du GRIF** (French), Belgian monthly journal, Rue Blanche 29, 1050, Brussels, Belgium

**CRIF** (French), feminist quarterly, 1 rue des Fossés-Saint Jacques, 75005 Paris, France

**Cidhal Noticias** (Spanish), quarterly women's news bulletin, Apdo. 579, Cuernavaca 62000, Morelos, Mexico

**DIVA** (Dutch), bi-monthly lesbian publication, Postbus 10642, 1001 EP, Amsterdam, Holland

**Emma** (German), West German feminist monthly, Kolpingplatz 1A, 5 Köln 1, West Germany

**fem** (Spanish), Mexican feminist bi-monthly, Av. Mexico No. 76-1, Col. Progreso Tizapan, Mexico 20, D.F., Mexico

**Fireweed** (English), Canadian feminist quarterly, Box 279, Stn. B, Toronto, Ont. M5T 2W2, Canada

**Girls' Own** (English), Australian feminist bi-monthly, Box 188, Wentworth Bldg., Sydney Univ. 2006, Australia

**Horizons** (English), Canadian feminist monthly, 125 Osborne St. S., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3L 1Y4, Canada

**ILIS** (mostly English), Int'l Lesbian Information Service, Box 1305, Vika, Oslo 1, Norway

**ISIS WICCE Women's World** (English), quarterly international feminist publication, box 2471, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland

**ISIS International Women's Journal** (English and Spanish editions), international feminist publication, via Santa Maria dell'Anima 30, 00186 Rome, Italy and casilla 2067, correo central, Santiago, Chile

**Kommentar** (Swedish), bi-monthly journal focusing on third world news, Box 5220, 10245 Stockholm, Sweden

**Kvinder** (Danish), Danish feminist bi-monthly, Gothersgade 37, 1123 Copenhagen, Denmark

**Kvinnejournalen** (Norwegian), Norwegian feminist bi-monthly, Boks 53 Bryn, Oslo 6, Norway

**Kvinnor Bulletin** (Swedish), Swedish feminist bi-monthly, Snickarbacken 10, 111 39 Stockholm, Sweden

**Lesbisch Archief** (Dutch), lesbian feminist publication, Postbus 4062, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands

**Lesbenstitch** (German), bi-monthly lesbian journal, Postfach 304149, 1000 Berlin 30, W. Germany

**Lysistrata** (English), women's peace magazine, 11 Princes St., Brighton, Sussex, England

**Manushi** (English and Hindi), Indian feminist bi-monthly, C1/202 Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi 110024, India

**Maria, Liberación del Pueblo** (Spanish), Mexican feminist monthly, Apdo. 158-B, Ave. Morelos 714, Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico

**\*Mujer\* CEFEMINA** (Spanish), Costa Rican feminist monthly, Apdo. 949, San José, Costa Rica

**Mujer/ILET** (Spanish), Latin American Women's News Service, Casilla 16-637, Correo 9, Santiago, Chile

**Mulherio** (Portuguese), Brazilian feminist monthly, rua Amélia de Noronha, 268, Pinheiros, 05410 São Paulo, SP, Brazil

**NOGA** (Hebrew), Israeli feminist quarterly, P.O. Box 21376, Tel Aviv 61213, Israel

**Opzij** (Dutch), Dutch feminist monthly, Kloveniersburgwal 23, postbus 1311, 1000 BH Amsterdam, Holland

**Outwrite** (English), English feminist monthly, Oxford House, Derbyshire St., London E2, England

**Resources for Feminist Research** (English and French), Canadian feminist resource quarterly, 252 Bloor St. West, Toronto, Ont. M5S 1V6 Canada

**Spare Rib** (English), English feminist monthly, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1R 0AT, England

**Torajyra** (Finnish), lesbian publication, Akaat PL 55, 00511 Helsinki 51, Finland

**La Tortuga** (Spanish), Peruvian feminist monthly, Huancavelica 470, Oficina 408, Lima, Peru

**La Vie en Rose** (French), French-Canadian feminist bi-monthly, 3963 St. Denis, Montreal, Que. H2W 9Z9, Canada

**Vi Manskor** (Swedish), Swedish women's journal, Barnsgaten 23, 11641 Stockholm, Sweden

**Voice of Women** (English, Sinhalese, Tamil), Sri Lanka Journal For Women's Emancipation, 18/9, Chitra Lane, Colombo 5, Sri Lanka

**Vrouwenkrant** (Dutch), Dutch feminist monthly, Postbus 18180, 10012B Amsterdam, Holland

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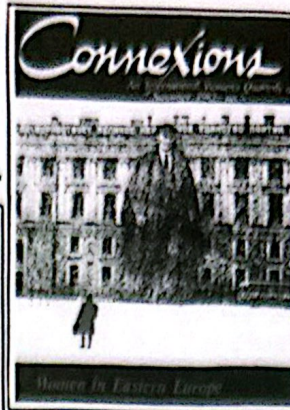
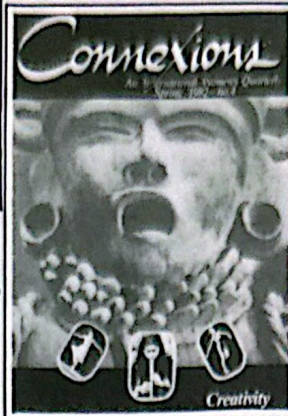
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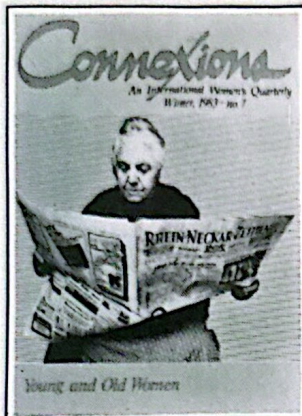
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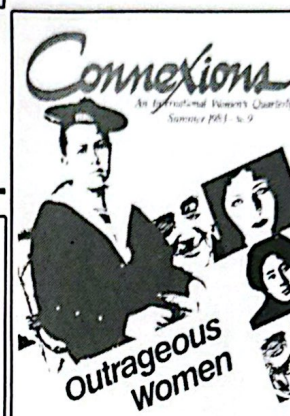
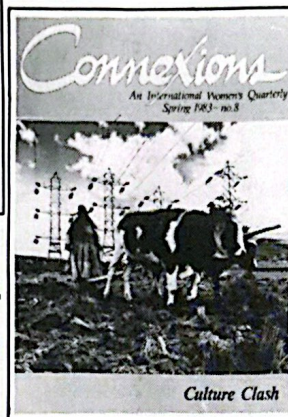
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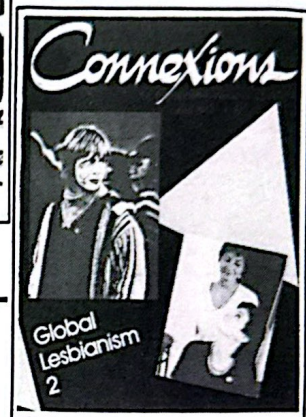
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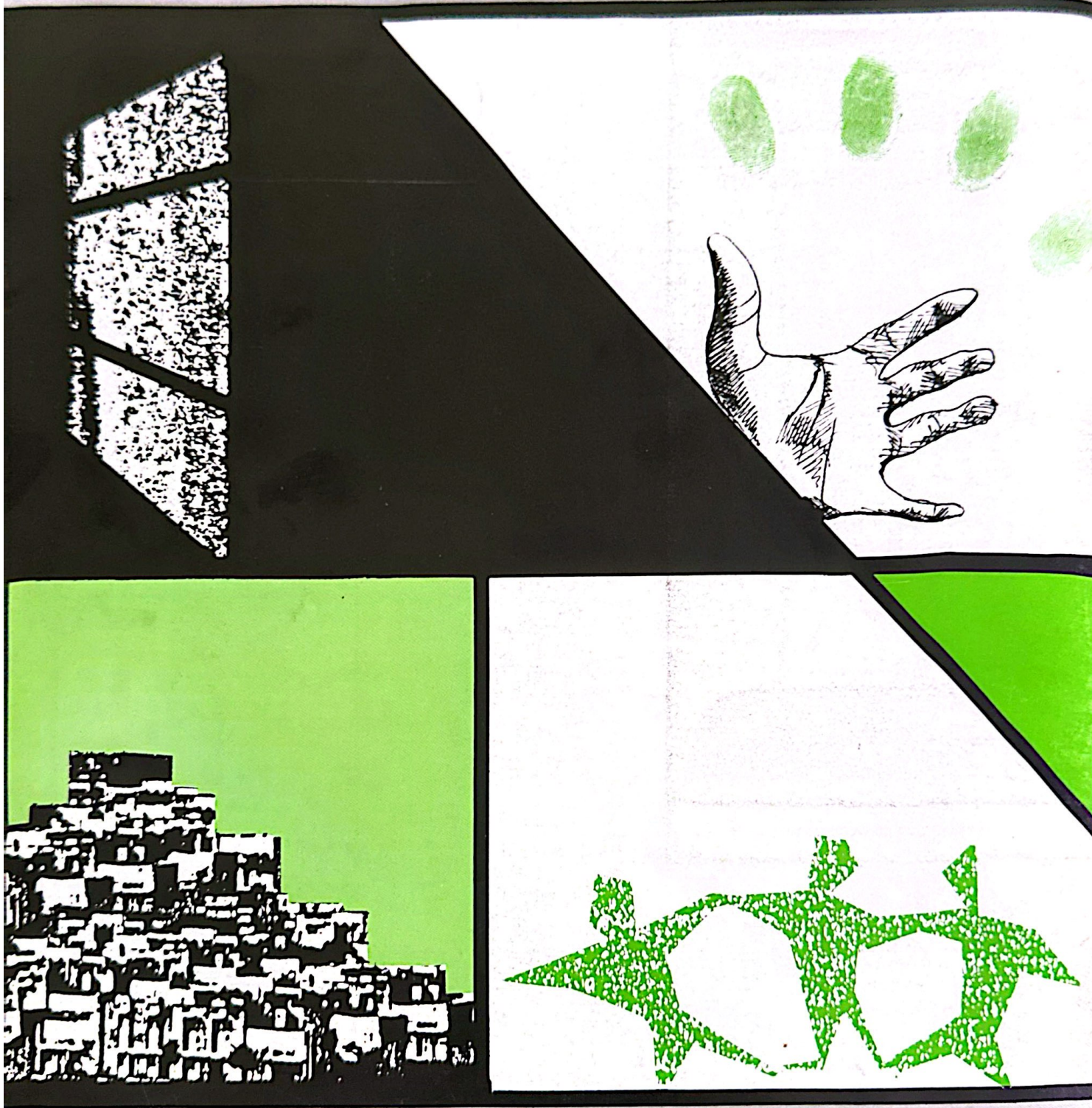
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Front cover photo Political prisoners in Yzerias prison, Spain. Coming from different political groups, these women have formed a commune on the inside, where daily support is given, food, cleaning, money, work and ideas are shared. (Serv. Al Pueblo)

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